The Telegraph

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HOTTIE

ALERT!

Glen Powell is Hollywood's next big thing t2

ANIMATION

OPTIONS

What makes it such a popular career choice P11

SHARED

VIEW

Milan Kundera, Italo Calvino and AI P10

20 YEARS &

COUNTING

At 39, Ronaldo starts his 6th Euro P14

IN BRIEF

Authors' warning to NCERT

■ **NEW DELHI:** The chief advisers for the NCERT textbooks published in 2006 have reminded the Centre's school book publisher to remove their names from edited texts. Their email, warning of legal action unless the books with their names are withdrawn, came after it was revealed that the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992 and a paragraph against "minority appeasement" had been added to the latest textbooks.

Sikkim evacuation

■ **DARJEELING:** The evacuation of over 1,200 tourists who have been stranded in north Sikkim for the past five days started on Monday but only around 50 could be rescued on Day 1 because of bad weather. Ropes were used so the tourists could negotiate the landslide-hit stretches without much discomfort.
EAST

Manipur review

■ **NEW DELHI:** Union home minister Amit Shah on Monday chaired a meeting to review the security situation in BJP-ruled Manipur days after RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat flagged the Centre's inaction in the strife-torn northeastern state.
NATION

RSS-BJP 'rift'

■ **LUCKNOW:** RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Monday ended his five-day visit to Gorakhpur, cold-shouldering chief minister Adityanath in his backyard and handing advice to Sangh cadres that underlined the growing discord between the BJP and its ideological fountainhead.
NATION

QUOTE

It is a fact that accidents are not in anyone's control but it is also a fact that the anti-collision system is not being properly implemented

MAMATA BANERJEE

9 die in Bengal train crash

Glare on lack of device to avoid collisions

BIRESWAR BANERJEE

Siliguri: At least nine people were killed and 41 others injured after the Down Kanchenjunga Express from Agartala to Sealdah was hit from behind by a goods train near Rangapani railway station here on Monday morning, amid initial suggestions of human error.

The driver and assistant driver of the goods train and the guard on Kanchenjunga were among those who died in the 8.55am disaster at Chhoto Nirmaljote village, about 10km from New Jalpaiguri railway station in the Katihar division of NF Railway.

Four coaches of Kanchenjunga, a popular train that connects Calcutta with north Bengal and the Northeast and was carrying about 1,300 passengers, got derailed. So were five wagons of the goods train, travelling between the Rangapani and Catterhat stations.

Till late evening, the railways had not officially revealed the speeds at which the two trains were travelling.

Manoj Dey, a resident of Bidhannagar in Calcutta, who was in a three-tier AC coach, B-1, with his wife and four-year-old daughter, said the Kanchanjunga Express was "moving slowly" when the accident occurred.

"The train was moving slowly. All of a sudden, I felt the train shaking and fell on the floor," Dey said.

Multiple sources in the railways said the casualties were relatively low because Kanchenjunga's rear was made up of the parcel coach and the guard's coach.

"The passenger compartments were further ahead and suffered lesser impact. Else, the casualties would have been higher," a source said.

People from a nearby village were the first to arrive. They rescued some of the injured and pulled out a half-dozen bodies.

Railway authorities, aided by the district administration, later took over the rescue operations, which were slowed by heavy rain.

The rescue teams initially avoided using gas cutters because that could have endangered the lives of those trapped inside the train.

The collision between two trains travelling on the same track and in the same direction immediately turned the spotlight on the absence of the anti-collision system, which the railways have for years been promising to install across the country.

Kavach, a made-in-India system to prevent train collisions, has not yet been installed on the tracks in Darjeeling.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3 ▶

The derailed coaches of the goods train and the Kanchenjunga Express at Chhoto Nirmaljote village in Darjeeling on Monday. Picture by Passang Yolmo ■ See Pages 3, 4 and Metro

Spotlight on vacancies, long shifts

SNEHAMOY CHAKRABORTY

Calcutta: The huge vacancies for the posts of loco pilot and assistant loco pilot and the long hours these employees are forced to work have come under the spotlight after railway authorities blamed the goods train driver for Sunday's collision near New Jalpaiguri.

As for the absence of an anti-collision device that would have prevented the accident, railway officials said it would take years to install the mechanism across India's railway network because of high costs and technical challenges. **(See Metro)**

In her initial reaction, railway board chairperson Jaya Verma Sinha blamed the driver of the goods train that had rammed the Sealdah-bound Kanchenjunga Express from behind.

"Preliminary investigations suggest that the goods train driver disregarded the signal and hit the Kanchenjunga from the rear end," Sinha said.

Her comment, made before a full-fledged inquiry, provoked outrage among railway employees and union leaders.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3 ▶

On Eid, sacrifice spurred by the 'call of humanity'

BIRESWAR BANERJEE

Siliguri: This Eid al-Adha turned out to be a day of sacrifice for Fazlur Rahman, 28, and his friends in more ways than one.

Fazlur had just finished offering Eid prayers at the local mosque at Chhoto Nirmaljote village, Darjeeling district, with friends and family and was preparing for the feast and celebrations when a loud explosion shook everyone.

"We had started offering prayers from 8am and had just finished namaz when we heard a loud explosion," Fazlur said.

After the initial shock, they all realised the sound could only mean an accident on the railway tracks, about half a kilometre away, and set off for the site.

It was about 8.55am. "After walking a short distance, we saw that several railway coaches had been derailed," Fazlur said.

The Sealdah-bound Kanchenjunga Express from Agartala had been rammed from the rear by a goods train.

Several villagers started dashing across the paddy fields towards the accident spot. Fazlur was among the first to reach the site.

Fazlur Rahman, one of the rescuers, at the accident site. Picture by Passang Yolmo

On a day Bengal witnessed one of the year's worst railway disasters, several youths from this minority-dominated village, 25km from Siliguri town, responded to what they termed "the call of humanity" to rescue and assist strangers in a crisis.

The feast and the celebrations did not cross their minds once in the face of the human tragedy.

Several villagers told **The Telegraph** the scenes were heart-rending.

"The scene at the accident spot was scary.... Coaches had been derailed. Some people lay unconscious, some were bleeding heavily, women and children were crying. I had never before been in such a situation," said Fazlur, who was marshalling his friends to help the injured while speaking to this newspaper.

He added: "Several people from our village were at the spot, and we decided to split into groups and begin the rescue work."

While some groups helped the injured and pulled out the bodies, others collected the luggage and assembled them in one place.

"We wanted to make sure that the luggage did not get lost in the melee," said Mohammed Hakim, another youth.

The youths guarded the luggage until forces from Phasidewa police station and railway officials arrived about half an hour later. Many of the villagers stayed back till late in the afternoon.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3 ▶

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. File picture

In Wayanad, Priyanka tempts history

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi: A never-before prospect awaits India's Parliament should Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, named for the Wayanad seat by the Congress as replacement for brother Rahul, win the contest: two siblings and their mother (Sonia Gandhi in the Rajya Sabha from Rajasthan) will form an unprecedented trio as members.

On Monday, Priyanka agreed to take the electoral plunge from Wayanad after the Congress top brass decided it was in the best interest of the party that Rahul vacate the Kerala seat and retain Rae Bareli, given the political significance of Uttar Pradesh which sends 80 MPs to the Lok Sabha while Kerala just 20.

Though not surprising, the official announcement that Priyanka would contest from Wayanad has been welcomed even by Rahul's nearest rival. Annie Raja, who managed to shrink the Congress MP's margin from over four lakh in 2019 by nearly 70,000 votes this time, welcomed the decision to retain Rae Bareli.

"Taking the national political situation into consideration and as a senior Congress leader, Rahul Gandhi's decision to retain Rae Bareli is the most appropriate since it's important to be in the Hindi heartland," Raja told a channel.

The decision was taken on Monday evening at a meeting held at Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's residence, where the party's core group comprising Sonia Gandhi, organisation general secretary K.C. Venugopal and Rahul and Priyanka were present.

Announcing the decision, Kharge said the deadline for making the choice expired on Tuesday, and thus the party had decided that Rahul should vacate Wayanad and retain Rae Bareli, with which the Nehru-Gandhi family has been associated for generations.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 ▶

STUDY: REROUTING OF CHANNEL IN BANGLADESH

Quake that altered Ganga course

G.S. MUDUR

New Delhi: A previously unknown earthquake 2,500 years ago abruptly altered the course of the Ganga, rerouting its main channel in present-day Bangladesh and leaving behind a muddy floodplain currently used for rice cultivation.

Scientists announced on Monday their discovery of a 1km-to-1.7km-wide meandering paleochannel, 45km south of the modern Ganga-Padma river's main channel. The paleochannel is a scar left by the river's earlier course before the earthquake, they said.

The paleochannel, detected via satellite imagery, and features called sand dikes in the mud — signatures of an earthquake-triggered process called liquefaction — point to a magnitude 7 or 8 earthquake that originated more than 180km away, the researchers said.

Bangladesh's delta region. Credit: Steve Goodbred

"In a delta region, rivers move over decades to centuries — that is not unusual," Elizabeth Chamberlain, a geologist at Wageningen University in the Netherlands and the Ganga study's first author, told The Telegraph in a telephone interview. "But this was an abrupt, big geological event," she added.

The study's findings, published on Monday in the science journal *Nature Communications*, provide fresh evidence of the vulnerability of the Ganga-Brahmaputra delta region across Bangladesh and eastern India to even moderate earthquakes.

"Geological records show that large earthquakes have ravaged Bangladesh and the neighbouring region several times in the historic and prehistoric past," said Syed Humayun Akhter, a former geology professor at Dhaka University, now the vice-chancellor of Bangladesh Open University and the study's co-author.

The earthquakes have left signatures such as the sand dikes, changes in terrain features and what geologists call river avulsions, the rapid abandonment of a river channel and the emergence of a new one.

Scientists have documented over 100 river avulsions through history, including those by the Mississippi in the US, the Yellow River in China, and the Kosi in India.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 ▶

BJP upper hand in Speaker race

J.P. YADAV

New Delhi: The BJP looks set to retain the Lok Sabha Speaker's post with the Telugu Desam Party relinquishing its claim and the Janata Dal United too giving the thumbs-up, sources said.

The BJP has entrusted defence minister Rajnath Singh with the task of talking to the allies and the Opposition to ensure the Speaker's election is unanimous.

The first session of the 18th Lok Sabha is scheduled to begin on June 24, with the Speaker's election slated for June 26.

The Desam was initially said to be keen on the Speaker's post, especially keeping in mind the BJP's knack of engineering defections from other parties without disqualification. But BJP sources said the party had managed to get the Andhra Pradesh ally on board.

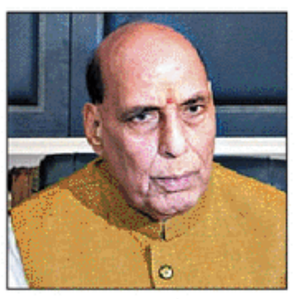
The other principal NDA partner, the JDU, is learnt to have agreed that the post should go to the largest party in the ruling alliance, the BJP.

"The next Speaker will be picked through consensus by the NDA partners and the person will be from the BJP. Rajnath*ji* has already begun consultations," a senior BJP leader said.

With Modi's third government signalling continuity by retaining all the senior ministers from his second, sources close to outgoing Speaker Om Birla are hopeful that he too would get a second term as the presiding officer of the Lower House.

Birla has been re-elected to the Lok Sabha from Kota in Rajasthan and is known to enjoy the trust and support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Opposition parties might, however, oppose Birla's candidature given the record number of suspensions of their MPs in the 17th Lok Sabha.



Rajnath Singh, who is talking to the allies and the Opposition to ensure the Speaker's election is unanimous. (PTI picture)

Former Biju Janata Dal leader Bhartruhari Mahtab, who crossed over to the BJP in March just ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, appears to be another contender for the post.

A multiple-term MP and recipient of several "Best Parliamentarian" awards, the 66-year-old Mahtab was re-elected from Cuttack on a BJP ticket this time.

Some in the BJP, though, feel that the soft-spoken Mahtab's unassertive personality may not suit the party at a time when the Opposition, its numbers boosted, is raring to corner the government in the House.

The Desam could push for a member from Andhra Pradesh, such as state BJP chief D. Purandeshwari, to be appointed Speaker.

Purandeshwari, elected from the Rajahmundry seat, is the daughter of the late Desam founder, N.T. Rama Rao, and sister-in-law of Andhra chief minister and Desam boss Chandrababu Naidu.

Picking Purandeshwari can kill three birds with one stone: the BJP will keep the Speaker's post, the Desam will be happy, and the alliance can showcase its choice of a woman for the top parliamentary post.

Taliban leader warns against earning money

Islamabad: The Taliban's reclusive supreme leader on Monday warned Afghans against earning money or gaining worldly honour at a time when the country is in the grip of humanitarian crises and isolated on the global stage.

Hibatullah Akhundzada gave his warning in a sermon to mark the festival of Eid al-Adha at a mosque in southern Kandahar province, weeks before a Taliban delegation goes to Doha, Qatar for UN-hosted talks on Afghanistan.

This is the first round of talks the Taliban will attend since they seized power in August 2021. They weren't invited to the conference of foreign special envoys to Afghanistan in the first round, and they snubbed the second round because they wanted to be treated as the country's official representatives.

No government recognises the Taliban as the legitimate rulers of Afghanistan.

UN spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said the invitation to the Doha meeting at the end of June does not imply recognition of the Taliban.

Akhundzada reminded Afghans of their duties as Muslims and made repeated calls for unity in his 23-minute sermon.

Messages by him and another influential Taliban figure, Sirajuddin Haqqani, to mark a religious festival in April showed tensions between hardliners and more moderate elements who want to scrap harsher policies and attract more outside support.

In Monday's message, Akhundzada said he wanted brotherhood among Muslims and that he was unhappy about differences between citizens and Taliban officials. Public dissent over Taliban edicts is rare, and protests are swiftly and sometimes violently quashed.

He said he would willingly accept any decision to remove him as supreme leader, as long as there was unity and agreement on his ouster. But he was unhappy about differences and disagreement between people.

"We were created to worship Allah and not to earn money or gain worldly honour," Akhundzada said.

"Our Islamic system is God's system and we should stand by it. We have promised God that we will bring justice and Islamic law (to Afghanistan) but we cannot do this if we are not united. The benefit of your disunity reaches the enemy; the enemy takes advantage of it."

AP/PTI

Vladimir Putin. (Reuters)

Putin to visit North Korea after 24 years

Seoul: Russian President Vladimir Putin will arrive in North Korea on Tuesday for a two-day visit, his first in 24 years, both countries announced.

Putin is expected to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong-un for talks focused on expanding military cooperation as they deepen their alignment in the face of separate, intensifying confrontations with Washington.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said Putin will pay a state visit on Tuesday and Wednesday at Kim's invitation. North Korean state media didn't immediately provide details. Russia confirmed the visit in a simultaneous announcement.

The visit comes amid concerns about an arms arrangement in which Pyongyang provides Moscow with munitions to fuel Putin's war in Ukraine in exchange for economic assistance and technology transfers that would enhance the threat posed by Kim's nuclear weapons.

AP/PTI

US official calls for social media warning labels

ELLEN BARRY

New York: US surgeon general Dr Vivek Murthy announced on Monday that he would push for a warning label on social media platforms advising parents that using the platforms might damage adolescents' mental health.

Warning labels — like those that appear on tobacco and alcohol products — are one of the most powerful tools available to the nation's top health official, but Murthy cannot unilaterally require them; the action requires approval by Congress. No such legislation has yet been introduced in either chamber.

A warning label would send a powerful message to parents "that social media has not been proved safe," Murthy wrote in an essay published in *The New York Times* opinion section on Monday.

In his essay, he cast the effects of social media on children and teenagers as a public health risk on par with road fatalities or contaminated food.

"Why is it that we have failed to respond to the harms of social media when they are no less urgent or widespread than those posed by unsafe cars, planes or food?" Murthy wrote. "These harms are not a failure of willpower and parenting; they are the consequence of unleashing powerful technology without adequate safety measures, transparency or accountability."

Murthy pointed to research that showed that teens who spent more than three hours a day on social media faced a higher risk of mental health problems, and that 46 per cent of adolescents said social media made them feel worse about their bodies.

US teens are spending an average of 4.8 hours per day on social media platforms, according to a Gallup survey of more than 1,500 adolescents.

In an interview last month, Murthy said he had repeatedly heard from young people who "can't get off the platforms", often finding that hours had passed when they had intended to just check their feeds.

"The platforms are designed to maximise how much time we all spend on them," he said. "It's one thing to do that to an adult, and another thing to do it to a child, whose impulse control is still developing, whose brain is at a sensitive phase of development."

Past warning labels have had significant effects on behaviour. In 1965, after a landmark report from the surgeon general, Congress voted to require all cigarette packages distributed in the US to carry a warning that using the product "may be hazardous to your health".

That was the beginning of a 50-year decline in smoking. When the warning labels appeared, around 42 per cent of US adults were daily cigarette smokers; by 2021, that portion had dropped to 11.5 per cent. Other experts say that, while the rise of social media has coincided with declines in well-being, there is no evidence that one caused the other.

New York Times News Service

US surgeon general Dr Vivek Murthy. (File picture)

An Israeli military convoy in the Gaza Strip on Monday. (Reuters)

Hostilities continue despite Israel claim

Oslo: Hostilities continue in Rafah and southern Gaza despite the Israeli military's announcement on Sunday of tactical pauses in operations to allow humanitarian aid to enter, UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini told reporters in Oslo on Monday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday criticised plans announced by the military to hold daily pauses in fighting along one of the main roads into the Palestinian enclave.

Lazzarini, commissioner general of UNRWA, the main organisation delivering humanitarian aid to Gaza, said that there had been no pause in the fighting.

"There has been information that such a decision has been taken, but the political level says none of this decision has been taken," Lazzarini told a press conference.

"So for the time being, I can tell you that hostilities continue in Rafah and in the south of Gaza. And that operationally, nothing has changed yet."

The Israeli military said on Monday its forces were continuing focused, intelligence-based operations in the Rafah area, which included close combat with militants and seizure and destructions of weapons.

The military had announced at the weekend the daily pauses from 0500 GMT until 1600 GMT in the area from the Kerem Shalom Crossing, in southern Israel, to the Salah al-Din Road and then northwards. It later clarified that normal operations would continue in Rafah.

Meanwhile residents said Israeli forces were advancing deeper into the central and western areas of Rafah under heavy fire from the ground and the air on Monday.

Reuters

Move comes after two members leave Israel team

Netanyahu scraps war cabinet

PATRICK KINGSLEY AND CASSANDRA VINOGRAD

Jerusalem: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel has dissolved his war cabinet, an Israeli official said on Monday, a move that had been widely expected after the departures of two key members prompted demands from far-right politicians for representation in the influential group that made key decisions about the conflict in the Gaza Strip.

The two members, Benny Gantz and Gadi Eisenkot, quit Netanyahu's small war cabinet last week amid disagreements over the direction of the war. The men, both former military chiefs, had been seen as voices of moderation in the five-member body, which was formed in October after the Hamas-led assault on Israel.

The Israeli official suggested that Netanyahu's decision to disband the body — which was communicated to ministers at a wider cabinet meeting on Sunday — was largely symbolic given that Gantz and Eisenkot had already resigned.

Since their departures, discussions about the war have been driven by Netanyahu in conjunction with his defence minister, Yoav Gallant, and close advisers, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak publicly about the matter.

Dissolving the war cabinet formalises that process. It may also defuse calls from Netanyahu's far-Right coalition partners who might have hoped to fill the places of Gantz and Eisenkot.

According to Eisenkot, the influence of one of those far-Right leaders, Itamar Ben-Gvir, the minister of national security, had long loomed over the discussions in the war cabinet. After Gantz resigned, Ben-Gvir immediately demanded to join the group, writing on X that it was "about time to take brave decisions, achieve true deterrence, and bring true safety to the residents of the south, north, and all of Israel".

An image of Benjamin Netanyahu on a poster lies on the road during an anti-government protest in Tel Aviv. (Reuters)

Israeli news outlets reported on Monday that Netanyahu's move to disband the war cabinet was a direct response to that demand.

For now, big decisions about the war in Gaza will still be put to a separate and broader security cabinet. That group includes Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich, the finance minister. Both have argued strongly that Israel's military offensive in Gaza must continue until Hamas is destroyed.

Gantz, a longtime political rival of Netanyahu's, joined the government as a show of unity after Hamas's October 7 attack on southern Israel. He left the government earlier this month, citing frustration with Netanyahu's handling of the war.

Critics say Netanyahu's wartime decision-making has been influenced by ultranationalists in his government who oppose a deal that would bring about a ceasefire in exchange for the release of hostages. They have voiced support for the "voluntary migration" of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and reoccupying the territory.

New York Times News Service, AP/PTI

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE
Executive Engineer, P.W.Dte., Kolkata Electrical Division, invites e-tender for the work of "Annual Comprehensive, Preventive & Corrective Maintenance of Window, Ductable, Cassette & Split type Room Air-Conditioner machines at Jessop Building and Hemanta Bhawan Kolkata under Writers' Buildings Electrical Section-VI, PWD." Vide e-tender no. WBPWD/EEKED/eNIT-05Q/2024-25, Tender Id-2024_WBPWD_692426_1. Bid submission end date is 27.06.2024 upto 12.00 P.M. Details of Tender documents incl. Corrigendum, if any will be available at website: http://wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer, P.W.Dte., Kolkata Electrical Division. ICA-T8930(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
ABRIDGED NOTICE INVITING TENDER
e-N.I.T No. WBIW/EE/SDID/e-NIT-01/2024-25.
Circulated vide memo no. 326, Dated- 13.06.2024
Tender is hereby invited by the Executive Engineer, South Dinajpur Irrigation Division from the eligible, bonafide Contractors having requisite credential for 02(Two) No of works. Last date &time of submission of bid electronically is on 03/07/2024 till 17:00 Hrs. IST. Details of e-N.I.T are available in the office of the undersigned during office hours of any working day or at website www.wbiwd.gov.in & https://wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- M. Kumar, Executive Engineer, South Dinajpur Irrigation Division, Beltala Park, Balurghat. ICA-T8876(4)/2024

The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SGC039154
Bakreswar Thermal Power Project
P.O. BkTPP, Dist. - Birbhum, Pin - 731104
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
Ref No.: WBPDCL/Tend-Adv/24-25/BkTPP/CC-1830 Date: 12.06.2024
NIT No.: WBPDCL/BKTPP/NIT/E3111/24-25
E- Tenders in prescribed format are invited at https://wbtenders.gov.in by General Manager - BkTPP, WBPDCL from eligible Agencies/Companies in bid system for **"Rate Contract for Rotation & Replacement of 300 NB Ash Slurry Disposal Line (ASDL), BkTPP for two years". Tender Document Download Start Date:** 12.06.2024 at 09:00 AM. **Bid Submission End Date:** 05.07.2024 at 05.00 PM. **Contact Person:** Mr. Indranil Chakroborty, Sr. Manager - CC, BkTPP, WBPDCL. **Mobile:** 8373055604. **E-mail:** cc_bktps@wbpdcl.co.in For details please visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in ICA- T8924(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
DIRECTORATE OF EMPLOYEE'S STATE INSURANCE (M.B.) SCHEME, W.B.
NEW ESIC BUILDING, WING-B, 2nd & 3rd FLOOR, G.B. BLOCK, SECTOR-III, SALT LAKE, KOLKATA-700097
e-TENDER NOTICE
E-Tender is invited for "selection of Agency/whole seller/Dealer/Company (Manufacturer) to supply Photo copier machine with DADF & TONER (Black & White, 25 PPM, Print-Scan-Copy in build Duplex, Basic Machine & 1/F USB, NW Wifi, 1 GB Ram) = Automatic Duplex Scanning Unit" for this Directorate office. Detail information will be available in the Govt. website : https://wbtenders.gov.in and https://esiwb.gov.in Sd/- DIRECTOR ESI(MB)SCHEME, W.B. ICA-T8856(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
ABRIDGED TENDER NOTICE
No. 6/WBFOR/KSD/2024-25
The undersigned invites e-Tender for **Creation of CGS & Sal plantation under State Development Scheme, 2024-25** at different location under Kangsabati South Division. The last date for bid submission is 04.07.2024. For viewing and participating in e-tender visit www.wbtenders.gov.in And for details contact the office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Kangsabati (South) Division, Raghabpur Forest Complex, Raghabpur More, PO & Dist. Purulia, PIN- 723101. The details may also be obtained from www.westbengalforest.gov.in Sd/- Divisional Forest Officer, Kangsabati South Division, Purulia. ICA-T8862(3)/2024

The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SGC039154
Bakreswar Thermal Power Project
P.O. BkTPP, Dist. - Birbhum, Pin - 731104
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
Ref No.: WBPDCL/Tend-Adv/24-25/BkTPP/CC-1825 Date: 12.06.2024
NIT No.: WBPDCL/BKTPP/NIT/E3108/24-25
E- Tenders in prescribed format are invited at https://wbtenders.gov.in by the General Manager - BkTPP, WBPDCL from eligible Agencies/Companies in 3 Part bid system for **"Procurement of non-mettallic Expansion Bellow for Coal Mill Inlet & Outlet Pipe and Sleeve for Outlet Bellow under BMD, BkTPP". Tender Document Download Start Date:** 17.06.2024 at 14.00 hrs. **Bid Submission End Date:** 08.07.2024 at 12:00 hrs. **Contact Person:** Mr. Sumit Dasgupta, Dy. General Manager, HOD (Purchase Deptt), BkTPS, WBPDCL. **Mobile:** 8336903911. **E-mail:** s.dasgupta@wbpdcl.co.in/purchase_bktps@wbpdcl.co.in For details please visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in ICA- T8919(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER
NIT: WBFOR/SSFD/NIT 11 to 15/E OF 2024-25
Rate quotations/bids are invited from bonafide resourceful contractors for Creation of Plantations at various locations under Siliguri S.F. Division during 2024-25. **NIT No: WBFOR/SSFD/NIT 11 & 15/e of 2024-25. 1. Publishing date 18/06/2024. 2.** Last date of online submission of bids: **26/06/2024 (4:00 PM).** For viewing and participating in the e-Tender visit **www.wbtenders.gov.in** All other details are available at the office. Sd/- Divisional Forest Officer, Siliguri Social Forestry Division, 32, Girish Ghosh Sarani, Hakimpara, Siliguri, Phone 0353-2471426. E-mail ID: dfo.ssfd@gmail.com ICA-T8872(4)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
O/o the PCCF & HoFF (West Bengal)
e-Tender Notice
NIT No. WBFOR/ARANYA BHAWAN/ WBFD/ HOUSE KEEPING/2(e) 24-25
E-Tender is invited from bonafide, resourceful, experienced Contractors / Firms in West Bengal for the work of Housekeeping Service - 6th, 7th & 8th Floor of Aranya Bhawan, (Block LA-10A, Sector-III, Salt Lake City, Kolkata-700106. Last date of submitting of e-Tender online is on 28/06/2024 up to 4 p.m. E-Tender documents may be downloaded from www.wbtenders.gov.in from 18/06/2024. This notice will be visible at www.westbengalforest.gov.in on or before 18/06/2024. Sd/- Deputy Conservator of Forests Administration, Headquarter. ICA-T8864(2)/2024

The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SGC039154
Bakreswar Thermal Power Project
P.O. BkTPP, Dist. - Birbhum, Pin - 731104
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
Ref No.: WBPDCL/Tend-Adv/24-25/BkTPP/CC-1834 Date: 12.06.2024
NIT No.: WBPDCL/BKTPP/NIT/E3109/24-25
E- Tenders in prescribed format are invited at https://wbtenders.gov.in by General Manager - BkTPP, WBPDCL from eligible Agencies/Companies in bid system for **"Replacement of Existing Concealed Internal Aluminium House Wiring of 70 Nos. C Type Quarters of BkTPP Township by Copper Wiring along with Incorporation of Latest Safety Devices Like MCB or RCCB And Repair or Replenishment of Earthing System, CAPEX 23-24". Tender Document Download Start Date:** 10.06.2024 at 09:00 AM. **Bid Submission End Date:** 03.07.2024 at 05.00 PM. **Contact Person:** Mr. Indranil Chakroborty, Sr. Manager - CC, BkTPP, WBPDCL. **Mobile:** 8373055604. **E-mail:** cc_bktps@wbpdcl.co.in For details please visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in ICA- T8918(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
KMDA TENDER NOTICE
e-NIT No. 01/EE/ED-III/EM/KMDA of 2024-25
Online Tender is invited by the Executive Engineer, Electrical Division-III, E-M Sector, KMDA, 39A/3B, P.G.M. Shah Road, Kolkata-700095, from eligible agencies, for the work, **Sl. No., Name of the Work, (1)** Maintenance of Decorative lights, office lights, AC, Pump, fountain, sound system etc including daily ON & OFF Operation for a period of one year at "Satyajit Ray Park" Patuli, Kolkata. **(2)** Maintenance of Street/decorative Lighting installations and other equipments including daily ON & OFF Operation for a period of one year within "Floating Market" at Patuli, Kolkata. **(3)** Maintenance of Lighting installations including daily ON & off Operation for a period of one Year at "Benubanachaya" Water Park at Patuli, Kolkata. **(4)** Maintenance of Street Lighting installations and Deep Tube well submersible Pump Motor set including daily ON & OFF Operation for a period of one Year at "Baruipur District Head Quarter", Baruipur, 24 Parganas South. **(5)** Maintenance including daily ON & OFF Operation of Kalikapur Under Pass on EM By Pass. **(6)** Maintenance including daily ON & OFF Operation of street light, 3 Nos. Toran from Metro Cash Carry to Jora Bridge EM By Pass connector. **(7)** Maintenance including daily ON & OFF Operation of the entire installation for a period of one Year at Citizens' Park, Corn Field Road, Kolkata. **(8)** Maintenance including daily ON & OFF Operation of Electro-mechanical equipments of fountains near Ashoke Malhotra Cricket Academy within Rabindra Sarabar, Kolkata.. **Estimated Value of the work: (1)** Rs.4,75,152/-. **(2)** Rs.3,89,157/-. **(3)** Rs.4,74,669/-. **(4)** Rs.4,66,052/-. **(5)** Rs.2,74,829/-. **(6)** Rs.1,65,021/-. **(7)** Rs.3,35,740/-. **(8)** Rs.4,85,106/- respectively. **Earnest Money Deposit: (1)** Rs.9,503/-. **(2)** Rs.7,783/-. **(3)** Rs.9,493/-. **(4)** Rs.9,321/-. **(5)** Rs.5,497/-. **(6)** Rs.3,300/-. **(7)** Rs.6,715/-. **(8)** Rs.9,702/- respectively. **Time of Completion:** 365 days from the date of firm order for each sl. no., **Last date & time of Online Bid submission:** 26.06.2024 upto 13.00 hrs., for details contact the above office or visit both websites. **(KMDA-47)** www.kmda.wb.gov.in www.wbtenders.gov.in ICA- T8899(3)/2024

The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SGC039154
Bakreswar Thermal Power Project
P.O. BkTPP, Dist. - Birbhum, Pin - 731104
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
Ref No.: WBPDCL/Tend-Adv/24-25/BkTPP/CC-1832 Date: 12.06.2024
NIT No.: WBPDCL/BKTPP/NIT/E3127/24-25
E- Tenders in prescribed format are invited at https://wbtenders.gov.in by General Manager - BkTPP, WBPDCL from eligible Agencies/Companies in 2 Part bid system for **"Assistance in Coal Chokage Cleaning of Feeder to Mill and Mill Inside Coal Cleaning of Stage-I and Stage-II Units of BkTPP". Tender Document Download Start Date:** 14.06.2024, at 09:00 AM. **Bid Submission End Date:** 05.07.2024 at 03:00 PM. **Contact Person:** Mr. Indranil Chakroborty, Sr. Manager - CC, BkTPP, WBPDCL. **Mobile:** 8373055604. **E-mail:** cc_bktps@wbpdcl.co.in For details please visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in ICA- T8916(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE
EE/KNHED/PWDte. invite online e-tender for the work "Day to day Preventive Maintenance of Entire Electrical Installation for Sub Station, Both Non-Residential & Residential Bld, Compound Light incl. Operation of All Diesel Generator Set (Existing & upcoming all El) at I.B.T.M. & I.H., Maniktala & Maniktala R.G. Kar MCH Boys Hostel." e-NIT No. WBPWD/EE/KNHED/NIQ-15/2024-25, Tender Id :- 2024_WBPWD_692467_1. Bid Submission Start Date (online) : 21/06/2024, 1.05 PM. Bid Submission Closing Date (online) : 04/07/2024 upto 1.00 PM. Corrigendum if any will be Published in website only. Details of NIT and Tender Documents may be download from http://wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- S. Chakraborty/EE/KNHED/PW Dte/ Govt. of WB ICA-T8941(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER
Executive Engineer, P.W.Dte., Kolkata North Health Division, online E-tender are follow / follows. NIT NO., ID & Last Dt. WBPWD/EE-II/KNHD/NIT-08e/24-25, 2024_WBPWD_692285_1, 04-07-2024 at 03.00 PM. Detail information will be obtained from the website http://etender.wb.nic.in Sd/- Executive Engineer, P.W.Dte., Kolkata North Health Division. ICA-T8933(3)/2024

The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SGC039154
Bakreswar Thermal Power Project
P.O. BkTPP, Dist. - Birbhum, Pin - 731104
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
Ref No.: WBPDCL/Tend-Adv/24-25/BkTPP/CC-1826 Date: 12.06.2024
NIT No.: WBPDCL/BKTPP/NIT/E3099/24-25
E- Tenders in prescribed format are invited at https://wbtenders.gov.in by the General Manager - BkTPP, WBPDCL from eligible Agencies / Companies in 3 Part bid system for **"Procurement of Critical Spares for the Bowl Mill (XRP883) of Unit 4 and 5". Tender Document Download Start** Date: 17.06.2024 at 14.00 hrs. **Bid Submission End Date:** 15.07.2024 at 12:00 hrs. **Contact Person:** Mr. Sumit Dasgupta, Dy. General Manager, HOD (Purchase Deptt.), BkTPS, WBPDCL. **Mobile:** 8336903911. **E-mail:** s.dasgupta@wbpdcl.co.in/purchase_bktps@wbpdcl.co.in For details please visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in ICA-T8922(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
ABRIDGED TENDER NOTICE
State Forest Training Institute, Hijli, Kharagpur invites Tenders from eligible bidders/suppliers having experience of similar type of works for "11th Batch 1(One) Month Promotee Frontline Staff Training Course (DR/Fr/FG) & one month Training course of FOREST WORKERS under WBFDCL (2nd Phase)" **e-Tender Notice Nos. WBFOR/DIR-SFTI HIJLI/e-NIT 1/SPAP of 2024-25, WBFOR/DIR-SFTI HIJLI/e-NIT 2/SPAP of 2024-25, WBFOR/DIR-SFTI HIJLI/e-NIT 3/SPAP of 2024-25 & WBFOR/DIR-SFTI HIJLI/e-NIT 4/SPAP of 2024-25 respectively.** The NIT will be published in the portal www.westbengalforest.gov.in and the last date for online Bid submission is **26.06.2024 upto 3.00 p.m.** For further details, eligible bidders are requested to download the Tender Notice from website or visit office. Sd/- Kamal Sarkar, WBFS, Director, State Forest Training Institute, Hijli, Kharagpur. ICA-T8861(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
THE DURGAPUR PROJECTS LIMITED
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
CIN NO. U40102WB1961SGC025250
NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)
NIT No. (1) WBDPL/DPPS/PUR/NIT (E)-004 SR/11/2024-25 dated-08.06.2024. Tender ID : 2024_DPL_690638_1 for Procurement of Sulphuric Acid (98 percent) for Chemical Laboratory, DPPS for a period of one year. **(2) WBDPL/DPPS/PUR/NIT(E)-005 SR/12/2024-25** dated-08.06.2024. Tender ID : 2024_DPL_690638_1 for Procurement of 10000 Litre of Ammonia Liquor for Chemical Laboratory, DPPS for a period of one year. **(3) WBDPL/PP/T/GM(PP)-12021(12)/10/2024/EMOPH/E/042** dated-10.06.2024. Tender ID : 2024_DPL_691017_1 for Repairing of different equipments parts under EMOPH DPPPS. **(4) WBDPL/PP/T/GM(PP)-12020(99)/3/2024/EMIPH/E/043** dated-10.06.2024. Tender ID : 2024_DPL_691033_1 for Overhauling of EOT crane 140 25 Ton capacity at TG floor of Unit 7. **(5) WBDPL/PP/T/GM(PP)-12020(18)/2/2024/EMIPH/E/044** dated-10.06.2024. Tender ID: 2024_DPL_691054_1 for Supply, erection and commissioning of contractor for HT switchgear of UB DPPS DPL. For Sl. Nos. 1 to 5, Bid submission end date: 22.06.2024, Bid Opening date: 26.06.2024 respectively. Visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in/ www.dpl.net.in ICA-T8874(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
Irrigation & Waterways Directorate
ABRIDGED NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(WBIW/EE/e-NIT-03/EE/M.D.D-II of 2024-25 Dated-13/06/2024)
Electronic submission of Bid is invited by the Executive Engineer, Metropolitan Drainage Division No.-II, Jalasampad Bhawan, 7th floor, Salt Lake City, Kolkata-91, I.&W. Dte. on behalf of the Govt. of West Bengal from eligible and resourceful contractors having sufficient credential of execution of similar nature of works at least 30% of Sl. No.- 1 to 7 of Amount put to Tender for **WBIW/EE/e-NIT-03/EE/M.D.D.-II of 2024-25.** Details of **WBIW/EE/e-NIT-03/EE/M.D.D.-II of 2024-2025** and Tender document may be downloaded from www.wbiwd.gov.in or https://wbtenders.gov.in or seen at Office Notice Board on and from **18.06.2024** at **10.30** hours. The date of download start date on and from **18.06.2024** at **16:30** Hrs. and the last date of Bid submission on **26.06.2024** at **16:00** Hrs. Sd/- EE/MDD-II, I&W Dte., Govt. of West Bengal ICA-T8868(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
Abridged e-NIT
The Executive Engineer-I, Joynagar Irrigation Division, I&W Dte. has invited tender notice against e-NIT No. WBIW/EE-I/JOY/NIT-03(e)/2024-25 on behalf of the Governor of West Bengal for 11 (Eleven) Nos. M/R to S/E, SOIL & Sluice works at Basanti, Canning-I & Gosaba Block under his jurisdiction from the eligible outside bonafide contractors. Estimated costs put to Tender are ranging from Rs. 2.11 lakh to Rs. 17.18 lakh only. Last date of bid submission online- 25.06.2024 upto 17:00 Hrs. for Sl. 02 to 09 & last date of bid submission online- 28.06.2024 upto 17:00 Hrs. for Sl. 01 and 10. Technical Bid opening date- 26.06.24 & 29.06.24 after 14:00 Hrs. respectively. Other details may be available from the office of the undersigned during office hours on any working days & websites: www.wbtenders.gov.in & www.wbiwd.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer-I, Joynagar Irrigation Division, Baruipur, South 24 Parganas. ICA-T8873(3)/2024

The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SGC039154
Bakreswar Thermal Power Project
P.O. BkTPP, Dist. - Birbhum, Pin - 731104
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
Ref No.: WBPDCL/Tend-Adv/24-25/BkTPP/CC-1829 Date: 12.06.2024
NIT No.: WBPDCL/BKTPP/NIT/E3104/24-25
E- Tenders in prescribed format are invited at https://wbtenders.gov.in by General Manager -BkTPP, WBPDCL from eligible Agencies/Companies in bid system for **"Annual Maintenance Contract for Operation & Maintenance of online Coal Sampler at Stage - I & Stage - II of BkTPP". Tender Document Download Start Date:** 08.06.2024 at 09:00 AM. **Bid Submission End Date:** 29.06.2024 at 05:00 PM. **Contact Person:** Mr. Indranil Chakroborty, Sr. Manager - CC, BkTPP, WBPDCL. **Mobile:** 8373055604. **E-mail:** cc_bktps@wbpdcl.co.in For details please visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in ICA- T8915(2)/2024

The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SGC039154
Bakreswar Thermal Power Project
P.O. BkTPP, Dist. - Birbhum, Pin - 731104
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
Ref No.: WBPDCL/Tend-Adv/24-25/BkTPP/CC-1833 Date: 12.06.2024
NIT No.: WBPDCL/BKTPP/NIT/E3088/24-25
E- Tenders in prescribed format are invited at https://wbtenders.gov.in by the General Manager - BkTPP, WBPDCL from eligible Agencies/Companies in 3 Part bid system for **"Procurement for One no. 30 HP Submersible P/P Motor along with Control Panel for BKDAM". Tender Document Download Start Date:** 15.06.2024 at 14.00 hrs. **Bid Submission End Date:** 08.07.2024 at 12.00 hrs. **Contact Person:** Mr. Sumit Dasgupta, Dy. General Manager, HOD (Purchase Deptt), BkTPS, WBPDCL. **Mobile:** 8336903911. **E-mail:** s.dasgupta@wbpdcl.co.in/purchase_bktps@wbpdcl.co.in For details please visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in ICA- T8913(2)/2024

WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANY LIMITED
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Regd. Office: Vidyut Bhavan, Block-DJ, Sector-II, Bidhannagar, Kolkata - 700 091
CIN: U40109WB2007SGC113473, www.wbsedcl.in
The **Chief Engineer,** Procurement & Contracts Department, WBSEDCL invites e-Tender from genuine manufacturers only for manufacture, testing, supply and delivery of the following items:

Sl. No.	Tender Notice No. & Description of Items	Quantity	Estimated Value (approx. in ₹)
1.	Tender Notice No. – P-09/2024-25/PC-I		
	33 kV AIS 1D Switchgear Board with VCB		
(i)	9 Panel	2 Sets	1.22 Cr.
(ii)	10 Panel	3 Sets	2.04 Cr.
(iii)	11 Panel	1 Set	0.75 Cr.
(iv)	11 Panel	1 Set	0.77 Cr.
		Total	4.78 Cr.
2.	Tender Notice No. – P-10/2024-25/PC-I		
	SCADA Compatible 12 kV Shunt Trip Switchgear Panel with VCB with different panel combinations as per NIT		
(i)	Incoming Panel	14 Sets	2.69 Cr.
(ii)	Bus Coupler Panel	4 Sets	1.27 Cr.
(iii)	Outgoing Panel	27 Sets	8.84 Cr.
		Total	12.80 Cr.

ICA-T8869(3)/2024
For details, visit https://wbtenders.gov.in & www.wbsedcl.in

WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANY LIMITED
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Regd. Office: Vidyut Bhavan, Block-DJ, Sector-II, Bidhannagar, Kolkata - 700 091
WBSEDCL invites e-Tenders as follows:
1) **NIT No.:** WBSEDCL/NTD/458/4608, **Dt.:** 07.06.2024 of the **Divisional Manager,** New Town Division, WBSEDCL for "Sl. No.1: *Supply and delivery of 13 nos. 33kV, 1250A centre rotating Isolator H/L with E.S. at New Town Divisional Store under New Town Division, WBSEDCL.* **Estimated Cost:** ₹8,09,744/- and Sl. No.2: *Supply and delivery of 17 nos. 33kV, 1250A centre rotating Isolator H/L without E.S. at New Town Divisional Store under New Town Division, WBSEDCL.* **Estimated Cost:** ₹8,77,370/-.
2) **NIT No.:** P-14/2024-25/PC-III/LTCT of the **Chief Engineer,** Procurement & Contracts Department, WBSEDCL. **Estimated Cost:** ₹ 26.04 Lakh for *'Manufacturing, testing, supply and delivery of 8000 nos. LT Ring Type tape wound Current Transformer with CTR:- 400/5A, class – 0.5s'.*
3) **NIT No.:** RM/24-PGN(S)/PROC/2024-25/636, **Dt.:** 11.06.2024 of the **Regional Manager,** South 24 Parganas Region, WBSEDCL. **Estimated Cost:** ₹ 18,38,231/- for the work (4th Call) of *'PKG-1: Conversion of LT overhead AB Cable line to LT UG by laying of different size of XLPE/PVC cable with erection of Service Junction Box and allied works at Kodghat Bazaar – 3, Peyarabagan (old), Ittikhola, Babupara Rikshaw Stand, Alkatan Club – 1, Alkatan Club – 2, Thakurpara, Tollygunge Pumping Station under KMC 114 Ward under Baruipur CCC, Garia Division, WBSEDCL'*
4) **NIT No.:** ZM/SLG/e-Tender/2024-25/08, **Dt.:** 10.06.2024 of the **Zonal Manager,** Siliguri Zone, WBSEDCL for the work of *'Biennial rate contract for road transportation of electrical equipments/ materials, including loading, unloading and proper stacking from Siliguri Zonal Store to different stores/sites of hill Divisions of WBSEDCL'*
5) **NIT No.:** PPSP/e-Ten/124/E/24-25/NIT-01, **Dt.:** 10.06.2024 of the **Chief Engineer & Project Manager,** Purulia Pumped Storage Project, WBSEDCL. **Estimated Cost:** ₹ 8,61,025/- for the work (2nd Call) *'Dismantling of existing 11 kV VCB panels, TR/CR panels and installation of 11 kV VCB panels, TR/CR panels and RTCC panel and other allied works for upgradation of PPSP 33/11 kV sub-station from 2×7.5 MVA to 2×10 MVA at PPSP 33/11 kV sub-station, Bagmundi, Dist.- Purulia'.*
ICA-T8893(1)/2024
For details, visit https://wbtenders.gov.in & www.wbsedcl.in

The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SGC039154
Bakreswar Thermal Power Project
P.O. BkTPP, Dist. - Birbhum, Pin - 731104
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
Ref No.: WBPDCL/Tend-Adv/24-25/BkTPP/CC-1831 Date: 12.06.2024
NIT No.: WBPDCL/BKTPP/NIT/E3074/24-25
E- Tenders in prescribed format are invited at https://wbtenders.gov.in by General Manager - BkTPP, WBPDCL from eligible Agencies/Companies in 3 Part bid system for **"Procurement of LT Power & Control Cables". Tender Document Download Start Date:** 14.06.2024 at 11:00 AM. **Bid Submission End Date:** 28.06.2024 at 15:00 PM. **Contact Person:** Mr. Sumit Dasgupta, Dy. General Manager - Purchase, BkTPP, WBPDCL. **Mobile:** 8336903911. **E-mail:** s.dasgupta@wbpdcl.co.in For details please visit: https://wbtenders.gov.in ICA- T8909(2)/2024

The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SGC039154
Bakreswar Thermal Power Project
P.O. BkTPP, Dist. - Birbhum, Pin - 731104
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

Years away from collision shield: Rail officials

The derailed coaches of the goods train and the Kanchenjunga Express after the crash in Chhoto Nirmaljote near Rangapani railway station on Monday. Picture by Passang Yolmo

Kavach lack sorely felt as one train hits another

SANJAY MANDAL AND DEBRAJ MITRA

Calcutta: An anti-collision system to help avert train accidents like the one at Chhoto Nirmaljote on Monday, where a goods train rammed into the Sealdah-bound Kanchenjunga Express, would take years to be installed across India's railway network because of high cost and technical challenges, railway officials said.

Kavach, the system to help prevent collisions if two trains are on the same tracks, was not installed on the tracks where Monday's crash occurred.

This revelation by Railway Board chairperson Jaya Varma Sinha underscores the ongoing challenge of equipping India's vast rail network with this crucial shield. "It is not there right now," she said, adding Kavach was being planned for the route.

Senior railway officials said Kavach, for which field trial was started in 2016, has been installed only in less than 1,500km of tracks out of the total 70,000km covered by the Indian Railways across the country.

Pointing towards a possible "human error" on the part of the loco pilot of the goods train who died in the accident, Sinha said the collision near New Jalpaiguri may have happened because the goods train disregarded the signal and hit the Kanchenjunga Express.

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee, who rushed to north Bengal, blamed the Centre for the slow pace of work.

"One accident after another is happening. Many bodies are still lying unidentified. Accidents can happen. But at the same time, it is also a fact that I prepared the anti-collision system during my tenure as railway minister. I used Konkan Railway (for a pilot project) in Mumbai and Goa. I personally visited Madgaon for the project," Mamata said. "The system is built in such a way that it will work even if the driver falls asleep. It will raise the alarm. If two trains come close to one another, the system will stop them."

Initially, it was called Train Collision Avoidance System, and later renamed Kavach. Alluding to it, Mamata added: "They (the Narendra Modi government) might give a new name to everything. But first become a shield for people, then talk big. Now, the focus on publicity is much more than the actual work being done."

Kavach, an automatic train protection (ATP) system, was developed by the Research Design and Standards Organisation (RSCO) with three Indian firms, said railway sources.

Senior railway officials said that Kavach, for which field trial was started in 2016, had so far been installed only in less than 1,500km of tracks.

However, two years ago, in her February Union budget speech, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman had promised that 2,000km of tracks would be brought under Kavach. That target has not yet been reached in June 2024.

According to a disclosure in Parliament in December 2023, tenders have been awarded for Delhi–Mumbai and Delhi-Howrah corridors (some 3,000km).

"Kavach was installed in the South Central Railway division as a pilot project nearly three years back. The project, after going through several trials, is now successful and will be installed in other divisions too," said a senior railway official.

"High costs and technical difficulties have slowed down the progress of installation," he, however, admitted.

Kavach offers significant safety benefits. The system can automatically alert drivers, apply brakes, and even halt trains to prevent collisions from signal passed at danger (SPAD) and overspeeding. It also assists in navigating adverse weather conditions and low visibility, enhancing operational safety.

But the Kavach rollout faces several hurdles. First, the cost is substantial. Equipping tracks and stations costs some ₹50 lakh per kilometer, while locomotives require an additional ₹70 lakh each.

Secondly, ramping up production by suppliers is crucial to expedite wider implementation. So far, the railways depended on indigenous suppliers. Reportedly, discussions are on to involve overseas players like Japan's Kyosan Electric, as well as European majors Siemens and Alstom to step up supply.

These hurdles apart, installing Kavach was time-consuming, an official added.

In February, Eastern Railway had said the Kavach trials were underway on the 260km Howrah–Chhota Ambana (Jharkhand) section of the Delhi-Howrah corridor. Starting from March 15, 2023, the Kavach system has been installed in 46 locomotives of Eastern Railway, a communication on February 26 said.

Railway Board chairperson Sinha said on Monday there was a plan to install Kavach in the Delhi-Guwahati route. On Bengal, she said: "The 3,000km (to be covered by Kavach) that we are planning this year includes the Delhi-Howrah route."

Additional reporting by our business bureau

Bengal train crash

▶ FROM PAGE 1

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee, who happens to be a former railway minister, questioned the delay in installing anti-collision devices across the country.

"It is a fact that accidents are not in anyone's control but it is also a fact that the anti-collision system is not being properly implemented," Mamata, who rushed to north Bengal on Monday afternoon, said.

She did not visit the accident site. She went to the North Bengal Medical College and Hospital, where most of the injured have been taken, and met some of the victims.

She later headed to Cooch Behar, where she was scheduled to go on Tuesday.

Hospital sources said that none of those hurt had "grievous injuries".

Railway board chairperson Jaya Verma Sinha hinted at human error in her initial reaction.

"Preliminary investigations suggest that the goods train driver disregarded the signal and hit the Kanchenjunga from the rear end," Sinha said.

Asked about the railways' failure to install the anti-collision system across the country, Sinha said work was to start soon on installing the system on the Delhi-Guwahati route, where the accident happened.

Opposition parties demanded railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw's resignation on moral grounds, citing Nitish Kumar's resignation as railway minister in 1999 after a train accident at Gaisal in North Dinajpur killed 290 people.

Vaishnaw, who arrived at the accident site after holding an emergency meeting in Delhi, reacted by saying: "This is not the time for politics."

He said an inquiry by the commissioner of rail safety had been initiated, and that treating the injured was now a priority.

"The focus right now is on the restoration of lines; the rescue operation has been completed. Let the (inquiry) report come out," Vaishnaw added.

Around 1pm, the Kanchenjunga resumed its journey with the unaffected coaches, a railway official said. He added that food had been arranged for the 1,293 passengers at the nearby Aluabari Road and Malda stations.

By 5.40pm, the wreckage had been removed and the Up line restored. However, eight trains were cancelled and 37 diverted through the day.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh for the next of kin of each of the dead and ₹50,000 for each injured.

Vaishnaw announced an "enhanced ex-gratia" of ₹10 lakh for the dead, ₹2.5 lakh for the grievously injured (if any), and ₹50,000 for minor injuries.

Spotlight on vacancies, long shifts

▶ FROM PAGE 1

Why had the railways kept over 18,000 posts of loco pilot and assistant loco pilot vacant for years, forcing longer shifts and additional stress on those who keep the wheels of the Indian Railways turning, they asked.

"The latest data from the authorities reveal that over 18,000 posts of loco pilots and assistant loco pilots have been lying vacant for years," said Nidhu Bhushan Dutta, a permanent invitee-member of the All India Loco Running Staff Association and former working president of the organisation.

"Despite repeated appeals from our organisation, the authorities have not taken any steps to appoint personnel to these vacant posts. Our members are forced to work longer than nine-hour shifts, and sometimes even 14 hours under pressure from their superiors," Dutta, who has retired after working as a loco pilot for around 30 years, added.

"Is it humanly possible for a loco pilot to work such long shifts year after year?"

Multiple associations of loco pilots said an RTI reply had revealed that of the 127,644 sanctioned posts of loco pilots and assistant loco pilots, 18,766 — nearly 15 per cent — were vacant as of March 1 this year.

"We are surprised that the railway board chief accused the deceased loco pilot of overshooting the signal before any proper inquiry. Why didn't they fill the vacant posts? Why did they force train drivers to work beyond their capacity?" Dutta said.

Stress from long working hours is not the train drivers' only problem, a union leader said.

He said that in the scorching summers, when the mercury touches 50 degrees in parts of the country, the temperature in the driver's compartment can be as high as "56-57 degrees".

"There is no air-conditioning inside the engine room, and the temperature is around 56-57 degrees during summer," said Abhimanyu Verma, Agra branch secretary of the North Central Railways Majdoor Union.

"With such a workload, human error may occur. So, the railways should fill the vacant posts before accusing train drivers."

A doctor at a state government hospital in Calcutta agreed that stress and additional workload are an invitation to error, which can be disastrous when someone is handling a train carrying thousands of passengers.

V.B. Singh, general secretary of the Eastern Railway Trinamool Men's Congress, said his association would launch a protest against the pressure put on loco pilots.

"After the railway accident in Balasore, Odisha, last year, we wrote to the railway authorities to fill the vacant posts. They issued an order to fill those posts, but never actually filled them," Singh said.

Several loco pilots, many of them working for over 20 years, claimed the railways not only needed to fill the vacant posts, they needed to appoint 30 per cent more than the sanctioned posts as the number of trains had increased.

They said thousands of train drivers were being made to work in breach of the protocol for leave and rest.

Nurse's normal workday turns tragic

BINITA PAUL

Nirmaljote (Siliguri): A nurse on duty at North Bengal Medical College and Hospital (NBMCH), on the outskirts of Siliguri, who was attending to patients on Monday morning, got the shock of her life.

Her husband Caleb Subba was one of the casualties of the Kanchenjunga Express train tragedy. His body arrived at the hospital where she was working.

Subba, a sub-inspector in the state excise department posted at Manikchak circle in Malda, as the officer-in-charge, had died under the impact of the collision when a goods train rammed into Kanchenjunga Express at Chhoto Nirmaljote area near Siliguri.

Caleb Subba, who died in the train crash

The excise officer, originally from Gorubathan, where his parents still live, boarded the train from New Jalpaiguri (NJP) Junction early on Monday after bidding his wife and son goodbye.

He had come to Siliguri on June 15 from his workplace Malda to see his two-year-old son "who was ill". He was going back to Malda to rejoin work on Monday.

Instead, he arrived at his wife's workplace as one of the nine casualties of the collision. One of his sisters, who rushed to the hospital after hearing the news, said his wife was "in deep shock".

Railways ruined and parentless, says Mamata

MEGHDEEP BHATTACHARYYA

Calcutta: Mamata Banerjee on Monday launched a broadside against the Narendra Modi government in the backdrop of the train collision in Darjeeling district, alleging the Centre was more focused on vanity railway projects than the safety of passengers.

"I don't know what is happening in this country. If the administration is so negligent, there is such nuisance.... Total rail department is facing callousness of the (Union) government," said the Bengal chief minister, who was railway minister over multiple stints during both the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led NDA and UPA II regimes.

"There is no separate (railways) budget. The rail ministry still exists. But the railways' *madhurjyo* (grace or charm, or loveliness) of the past, they have ruined it. Railways have become totally parentless," she added at the Calcutta airport, on her way to north Bengal in the afternoon, after having overseen rescue, relief and restoration operations remotely since 9am.

"You can now see the railways only at the time of inauguration. So many talking points, so many things said... beautification of words, just like it's a fashion. But they don't take care of the passenger amenities... only hiking fares."

The Trinamool Congress chairperson spoke at length on some of the crucial upgrades or infrastructure developments that had taken place in her stint at the helm of the Rail Bhavan, such as upgrading the signalling system, introducing anti-collision devices (ACDs), and converting hundreds of unmanned crossings to manned level crossings across India.

Mamata Banerjee speaks to the media after visiting the NBMCH in Siliguri on Monday. (Passang Yolmo)

Railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw rides pillion to the train accident site on Monday. (Passang Yolmo)

"In my tenure, we had upgraded the technology, the telecom system, and adopted the usage of ACDs. In fact, I had personally gone to Madgaon and met Konkan Railway officials, where trials for these ACDs were held," Mamata said later, outside the North Bengal Medical College and Hospital (NBMCH) in Siliguri.

Railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw who had visited the accident site refused to respond to Mamata's allegations. "This is not the time for politics," he said.

"The entire focus now should be on rescue and restoration. Passenger safety is a major area of focus, of complete focus. I will address this in detail later," added the railways minister.

Ajit Mandal, a Kanchenjunga Express passenger who, along with his family members, escaped with minor injuries, at the NBMCH, Siliguri, on Monday. (Passang Yolmo)

Big thud and total darkness: Survivor

BINITA PAUL

Siliguri: Ajit Mandal, 39, of Jalpaiguri, boarded the Sealdah-bound Kanchenjunga Express at NJP with his wife and son on Monday.

They were to go to Malda to attend a family wedding, but fate had other plans.

Speaking to the media hours from the North Bengal Medical College and Hospital, Ajit said that up to the moment of reckoning, everything was normal. He remembered buying tea and chips once the train left NJP.

"Suddenly, we felt a big thud. Then, there was total darkness. I lost consciousness," he added.

When Ajit regained his senses, he realised their train was involved in an accident. "My first thought was: Where are my wife and son."

He thanked his stars that all three of them could crawl out of the coach with the help of villagers.

He learned that nine persons had died. "It is an experience of seeing death up close," said Ajit. "We saw people bathed in blood inside our compartment. It was a very horrifying sight for my 12-year-old son."

50 tourists rescued on Day 1

VIVEK CHHETRI

Darjeeling: The evacuation of tourists from north Sikkim, who have been stranded for the past five days, started on Monday but most of them could not be rescued because of inclement weather.

Over 1,200 tourists, including two from Thailand, three from Nepal and 10 from Bangladesh, had been struck in Lachung and other northern areas of the Himalayan state since June 13 after landslides and flash floods had damaged roads and bridges.

Mangan district magistrate Hem Kumar Chhetri told **The Telegraph**: "We had planned to airlift the tourists but were unable to do so because of inclement weather. Today, we managed to rescue 50 tourists who are on their way to Gangtok."

Stranded tourists use ropes to negotiate a difficult stretch in north Sikkim on Monday

The administration had put in place adequate measures to ensure that tourists could walk through the debris of landslides.

Sources said ropes had been used so the tourists could negotiate the landslide-hit stretches without much discomfort.

"The tourists who were rescued today were all stranded at Chungthang," said Chhetri.

From Chungthang, they were brought to Mangan and were on the way to Gangtok.

Sikkim government officials said they were hoping to evacuate all the tourists within the next two days provided the weather didn't play spoilsport.

Sacrifice

▶ FROM PAGE 1

"It's a special day for our community but this thought became secondary. The entire focus of all the villagers present was to help the passengers.... We had to respond to the call of humanity," Hakim said.

Some villagers brought water while others tried to help by providing first aid in whatever way they could.

Mohammed Azibul, a migrant labourer in his late 20s who had returned home to celebrate Eid with his family, said the villagers had pulled out a half-dozen bodies from the bogies before the railway and district authorities arrived.

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Priyanka

▶ FROM PAGE 1

"The Congress believes it would be beneficial for the party if Rahul retains Rae Bareli. It has been decided that Priyanka will contest from Wayanad. She has agreed," Kharge said.

Section 91 of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961, mandates that a candidate who has won from more than one seat should vacate all but one within 14 days of his/ her date of election.

Briefly speaking to the media, Rahul said: "The people of Wayanad stood with me, the people of Wayanad gave me love and affection; every single person regardless of party.... They gave me the energy to fight in a very difficult time. I will never forget that.

"I want everyone in Wayanad to know that Priyanka is going to fight in Wayanad but I am going to be a frequent visitor to Wayanad and I am going to be available to the people of Wayanad and the commitments that I have made, we will stand by them.... The people of Wayanad now have two members of Parliament."

Stating that she "won't let them feel Rahul's absence", Priyanka said she was not nervous about her electoral debut.

Annie Raja welcomed the Congress's decision to field Priyanka. "Fielding Priyanka is a welcome decision since women's representation has reduced in the Lok Sabha," she said.

Rahul had an easy win from Wayanad this time, too, by a margin of 364,422 votes. Though less than the 2019 margin of 431,770 votes, his performance was another sign of how the people of Wayanad had embraced him.

The decision was in tandem with Rahul's assurance to the people of Wayanad during his "thanksgiving" visit on June 12 when he said: "What I will commit to you is that both Wayanad and Rae Bareli will be happy with my decision."

State Congress president K. Sudhakaran was more candid when he urged people to understand why Rahul must vacate Wayanad. "Rahul Gandhi, who has to lead India, cannot remain in Wayanad. Everyone please understand that," Sudhakaran had said although the AICC had not taken any decision then.

Senior Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala attributed Rahul's love for the people of Wayanad to the decision to field his sister. "That's why he decided to field Priyanka, one of the tallest leaders in the country today. She will win by a massive margin," he told a TV channel.

He had no doubts about the people's support for Priyanka. "People will wholeheartedly welcome Priyanka to Wayanad. But we need to realise the importance of Rahul retaining Rae Bareli since his fight in the Hindi heartland was instrumental in spoiling any chance of Narendra Modi getting a clear majority," he said.

Congress ally Indian Union Muslim League, too, extended its support to the decision. "We have always chaired the election committee in Wayanad. There won't be any change in our approach," IUML national general secretary P.K. Kunhalikutty told reporters on Monday.

He underlined the primordial responsibility of the IUML, which is part of the INDIA bloc, to protect secularism in the country. "Protecting secularism in the country is our main responsibility. We will be ready to take any steps to ensure that," he added.

Terrorist killed in Bandipora

Srinagar: A terrorist was killed in an encounter with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora district on Monday, officials said.

The gunfight broke out after security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Aragam on Sunday night following information about the presence of terrorists there, they said.

The army's Srinagar-based Chinar Corps said one terrorist has been killed. "Based on specific intelligence input regarding presence of terrorists, a joint operation was launched by the Indian Army and Jammu and Kashmir Police on the intervening night of June 16-17 in the general area of Gurihajin, Aragam Bandipora; one terrorist eliminated, operation in progress," the Chinar Corps posted on X. PTI

'Criminal abandonment of railways by Modi govt'

Opp call for Vaishnaw resignation

PHEROZE L. VINCENT

New Delhi: The Bengal railway disaster, marking the third major incident in just over a year, has sparked a wave of criticism from the Opposition that has questioned the accountability of railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and called for his resignation along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's.

TRACK CHANGE

ANI @ANI · 1h
Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw is leaving for Darjeeling to visit Kanchenjunga Express train accident site
(File photo)
ANI @ANI · 18m
Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw is leaving for Darjeeling to visit Kanchenjunga Express train accident site
(File photo)
ANI

The ANI news agency, considered close to the BJP dispensation, posted a picture of Ashwini Vaishnaw with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the background to say that the railway minister was leaving for the accident site

Soon after, ANI deleted the post and uploaded a new picture where only Vaishnaw can be seen

AAP MP and national general secretary, organisation, Sandeep Pathak said: "First, it is being told that both the trains were running on the same track, so did your signal system fail or was there any human error in it?

"Second, were anti-collision devices installed in these trains? If they were installed, then why did this accident happen and if they were not installed, when will anti-collision devices be installed in these trains?" Pathak asked.

He said that the question now arises who among the Prime Minister and the railway minister will take moral responsibility for these accidents. "The railways system has collapsed. Today, this entire institution is in danger. We urge the Prime Minister and the railway minister to take moral responsibility for the accident and resign immediately from their posts," he said.

Lal Bahadur Shastri, in 1956, and Nitish Kumar, in 1999, are India's only railway ministers who resigned after major accidents. Mamata Banerjee, Suresh Prabhu and Ram Vilas Paswan are known to have offered their resignations, which the then PMs did not accept.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge wrote on X: "In the past 10 years, the Modi govt has indulged in the utter mismanagement of the railway ministry. As a responsible Opposition, it is our bounden duty to underline how the Modi govt has systematically converted the rail ministry into a platform of 'camera-driven' self-promotion!

"Today's tragedy is yet another reminder of this stark reality. Make no mistake, we will remain persistent with our questions and shall make the Modi govt accountable for its criminal abandonment of the Indian Railways," he added.

Since June 2023, there have been two high-casualty disasters. A three-train collision in Odisha's Balasore on June 2, 2023, claimed 296 lives. On October 29, two trains collided in Andhra Pradesh's Vizianagaram, killing 17 people.

"Who is responsible for the continuous railway accidents in the country," former railways minister Lalu Prasad of the RJD wrote on X.

CPM Bengal state secretary Mohammed Salim posted on X: "Despite repeated claims by the @RailMinIndia travelling is becoming increasingly unsafe, risky and troubling. My heart goes out to the bereaved families. Compensation for all those victims and proper treatment for injured passengers are our demands...."

The CPIML-Liberation said in a statement that such incidents expose the Modi regime's lax attitude towards India's railway system that caters to millions of people.

Bhagwat avoids Yogi, bolsters rift talk

PIYUSH SRIVASTAVA

Mohan Bhagwat. File picture

Yogi Adityanath. File picture

Lucknow: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Monday ended his five-day visit to Gorakhpur, cold-shouldering chief minister Yogi Adityanath in his backyard and handing advice to Sangh cadres that underlined the growing discord between the BJP and its ideological fountainhead.

Bhagwat addressed about a half-dozen meetings of RSS cadres from Awadh, Kashi, Kanpur and Gorakhpur and, according to Sangh sources, broadly emphasised the following points:

■ Ahead of its centenary next year, the RSS is appointing "*shatabdi vistaraks*" (centenary expansionists) across the country who will make the outfit's presence felt in every village, meeting residents and organising *shakhas*.

■ The divisions in society have widened in recent years, posing a danger to the nation. Correcting this is the Sangh's duty. The RSS will organise community feasts across the country, inviting people from every caste. (Bhagwat didn't mention religious communities.)

■ Every Hindu must sincerely follow the values of the religion. The RSS will stick to the path of Chhatrapati Shivaji and Maharana Pratap to keep Hindus under its umbrella. (Both were warrior kings who fought the Mughals.)

■ Hindus must not practise discrimination or untouchability. This is important to protect Hindu culture, establish India as Vishwa Guru and turn it into a Hindu Rashtra.

An RSS functionary who asked not to be identified explained how the import of Bhagwat's strictures reflected the Sangh's disillusionment with the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"We are back where we were in 2014. The government was in a position to do anything it wanted for 10 years but involved itself in promoting an individual at the cost of the resources of the RSS while not honestly following its ideology," he said.

"The RSS had united Hindus over many years but they again got scattered in the last 10 years because the politicians disappointed them."

He added: "Atal Bihari Vajpayee's governments had an excuse for being unable to push our agenda — they were coalition governments. Modi's government kept working on peripheral issues amid its own politics of the canonisation of one person. And now there's a coalition government again, and it will be unable to do anything except enjoy the fruits of power."

So, the RSS leader said, the Sangh will now have to resume its work after a decade of political dependency.

Bhagwat had over the past week launched a veiled attack on the "arrogance" of the Narendra Modi-Amit Shah regime and advised RSS leaders and cadres to return to their "original task of helping the people", suggesting a distancing with the BJP.

BJP snubbed

Bhagwat put up at the S.V.M. Public School in Maniram Chiutaha area of Gorakhpur, barely 12km from the Gorakhnath temple, headed by Adityanath. But he met no BJP leader, with all requests for such meetings turned down politely.

Multiple Sangh and BJP leaders confirmed to this newspaper that they had been told on Wednesday, the day Bhagwat arrived in Gorakhpur, that Adityanath would meet him on June 15. But no such meeting happened though Adityanath was in his temple on Saturday and Sunday.

Asking not to be quoted, a political observer in Gorakhpur suggested the supposed RSS-BJP rift could be a drama played out to try and "keep the real Opposition on the periphery".

"Bhagwat cannot blame his workers or Modi. The Sangh allowed its workers to mingle with BJP politicians after Modi became Prime Minister," he said.

"Bhagwat himself accepted Z-plus security from the government in 2015 and sent a message to his cadres that things had changed. They should remember that K.S. Sudarshan (RSS chief from 2000 to 2009) had refused any security from the Vajpayee government."

He added: "Whatever the RSS is doing now may be a trick. It may be trying to build the façade of an opposition against the Modi government to keep the real Opposition on the periphery."

He explained: "The Opposition was weak from 2014 to 2024, and so the Sangh didn't need to do so. But now the Opposition is stronger after this year's Lok Sabha elections.

"The Sudarshan-led RSS had similarly played the role of a (proxy) opposition during Vajpayee's tenure, when the real Opposition was strong. The RSS would criticise the Vajpayee government for failing to build the Ram temple or abrogate Article 370. Perhaps the time has come for a repeat by the RSS because it cannot afford to discard the BJP in the long run."

Shah reviews Manipur security after RSS rap

IMRAN AHMED SIDDIQUI

Union home minister Amit Shah arrives to attend the review meeting on Manipur in New Delhi on Monday. (PTI picture)

New Delhi: Union home minister Amit Shah on Monday chaired a meeting to review the security situation in BJP-ruled Manipur days after RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat flagged the Centre's inaction in the strife-torn northeastern state.

Chief minister N. Biren Singh, who has been blamed for failing to stop the ongoing violence, was absent at the meeting where Manipur was represented by chief secretary Vineet Joshi and adviser to the state Kuldiep Singh.

Speculation was rife in political circles in Manipur over "missing" Biren, with some suggesting that the changed equation within the NDA could be one of the reasons. Some pointed out that Biren no longer enjoys the Centre's backing after the just concluded Lok Sabha polls in which the Congress won both seats in Manipur, with the mandate widely attributed to anger at the chief minister and the Centre's mishandling of the strife.

"It is still not clear why the chief minister was not called to attend the crucial review meeting. His absence could be seen as a major signal that Biren Singh no longer enjoys the Centre's support and a change of guard is imminent," a Union home ministry official said.

"Home minister said that central forces deployment will be increased, if required, and central forces should be deployed strategically to restore peace and tranquility in the state," a Union home ministry statement said.

Shah underscored the importance of a coordinated approach to resolve the ethnic conflict and said "the home ministry will talk to both the groups, Meiteis and Kukis, so as to bridge the ethnic divide, at the earliest".

The home minister also reviewed the situation of relief camps in Manipur and directed proper availability of food, water, medicines and other basic amenities. He also instructed the chief secretary to ensure proper health and education facilities for the displaced and their rehabilitation.

Manipur has witnessed a fresh spate of violence in the last couple of weeks as a school building at T Motha near Moreh was set ablaze while abandoned houses and shops were torched in Kalinagar in Jiribam district.

Last week, suspected militants ambushed the advance security convoy of the chief minister in Kangpokpi district, leaving a police commando injured.

Addressing an event at the RSS headquarters in Nagpur last week, Bhagwat had said: "Manipur is still burning. Who is going to pay attention to it? It is the duty (of the government) to deal with it on priority."

Opposition parties and members of civil society groups have slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not visiting the state even once since the unrest began.

Shah, who had visited Manipur in May last year, "was supposed to come again after 15 days" but did not.

Union home secretary Ajay Bhalla, director of Intelligence Bureau Tapan Deka, army chief Gen Manoj Pande, army chief-designate Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi and other security officials were present at the hour-long review meeting on Monday.

Ministers turn poll managers

J.P. YADAV

G Kishan Reddy. (PTI picture)

New Delhi: The BJP on Monday appointed key ministers as election-in-charges for Maharashtra, Haryana, Jharkhand and Jammu and Kashmir.

The Supreme Court has set a deadline of September 30 to hold elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

Assembly elections will be held for the first time in Jammu and Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 and the splitting up of the erstwhile state into two Union Territories.

Since then, the Opposition has been clamouring for full statehood for Jammu and Kashmir and the conduct of elections to install a popular government. The appointment of a key minister as poll-in-charge by the ruling party came as an indication that elections could finally be held and pave the way for restoration of statehood in accordance with the Supreme Court ruling.

While campaigning for the Lok Sabha polls in the Union Territory, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised that statehood would be restored soon.

G. Kishan Reddy, the newly appointed coal and mines minister, was named the election-in-charge for Jammu and Kashmir by BJP president J.P. Nadda.

For Maharashtra, a state where the BJP's performance in the Lok Sabha polls was pathetic compared to 2019, two senior ministers — environment minister Bhupendra Yadav and railways and information & broadcasting minister Ashwini Vaishnaw — were appointed as election-in-charges. The BJP rules Maharashtra indirectly with ally Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde as chief minister. The state is scheduled to go to polls in October.

For BJP-ruled Haryana, where the party managed to win just five seats, education minister Dharmendra Pradhan along with former Tripura chief minister Biplab Ded have been put in charge.

For the Opposition-ruled Jharkhand, two heavyweight leaders, newly appointed agriculture minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma (as co-in-charge), have been deployed.

All three states are due for polls between October and December and the BJP is desperately targeting to win at least two of them to counter the impression that the ruling party's dominance is taking a dip.

Nicobar project threat to tribals, says Cong

ANITA JOSHUA

The Nicobar Islands. File picture

New Delhi: The Congress on Monday demanded immediate suspension of all environmental clearances granted to the Greater Nicobar mega infrastructure project, pointing out that it was a threat to the tribal communities and natural ecosystem of the area.

Referring to the environment clearance given for diverting over 13,000 hectares of forest land, Congress media in-charge Jairam Ramesh — who is also a former environment minister — said this was equal to about 15 per cent of the island's land mass and constitutes one of the country's largest forest diversions in a nationally and globally unique rainforest ecosystem.

The Congress said the project was a direct threat to the well-being and survival of the Shompen — an indigenous community classified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group and the Nicobarese (a Scheduled Tribe). This apart, the project is coming up in a seismic zone and the compensatory afforestation is being planned in Haryana, the Congress pointed out, calling for an impartial review of the project including by a parliamentary committee.

Constitutional Conduct — a collective of retired bureaucrats who take up issues of national importance — has called for setting aside the present Social Impact Assessment and demanded that a proper one be undertaken with the Anthropological Survey of India.

In a letter to the tribal affairs ministry, home ministry, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes and the director of Social Welfare of the islands, they have suggested that if such an assessment shows a significant adverse impact on the Tribal Reserve in Great Nicobar and its vulnerable tribal groups, then the government should be advised to abandon the project.

The development project consists of an international container transhipment terminal, a large greenfield international airport, a township and area development, and a solar and gas-based power plant. The airport area covers 8.88sqkm of deemed forest, which is part of the Tribal Reserve area in Great Nicobar. "This would certainly affect the Shompen and the Great Nicobarese. Yet the SIA has not taken the trouble to communicate with them," the retired bureaucrats have underscored.

The retired bureaucrats also pointed out that the Tribal Council in their letter dated November 22, 2022, had withdrawn their consent from the NOC for the diversion of forest citing suppression of information, thereby making the Stage-I Forest Clearance granted to the project null and void.

"A petition was filed against this before the National Green Tribunal in Kolkata, who in their order dated 3rd April, 2023, had directed the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change to constitute a High Powered Committee to revisit the deficiencies of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment). The committee was asked to submit a report until which the NGT had placed a temporary stay on the project. We are unaware if the High Powered Committee submitted its report and what was mentioned regarding the violations pointed out by the NGT."

Yedi grilled in molestation case

K.M. RAKESH

Yediyurappa leaves after appearing before the CID in Bengaluru on Monday. (PTI picture)

Bangalore: Former chief minister and BJP parliamentary board member B.S. Yediyurappa appeared before investigators on Monday in relation to an alleged child molestation case, adhering to Karnataka High Court's order shielding him from coercive action by the CID.

In March, Yediyurappa was booked under IPC Section 354 (a) for sexual harassment and relevant sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (Pocso).

The details of Monday's questioning at the CID office remain undisclosed. The 81-year-old BJP leader has vehemently denied the accusations, asserting that those orchestrating the allegations will face consequences.

Earlier, the high court had barred the CID from taking any coercive steps following Yediyurappa's plea for interim bail. This decision followed a non-bailable warrant issued by a Pocso court, paving the way for his arrest in the case.

The incident leading to the case occurred on January 2, when a mother and her minor daughter visited Yediyurappa at his residence seeking assistance with a complaint against a family acquaintance accused of molesting the child.

According to the mother's complaint, Yediyurappa allegedly took the minor to a room, locked it and committed the act. She, however, waited until March 14 to register an FIR against the BJP leader, who had immediately denied the allegations.

After the survivor's mother passed away in May, her elder brother moved the high court to ensure a thorough investigation, including retrieval of digital evidence from Yediyurappa's home security cameras.

Quake altered Ganga course

▶ FROM PAGE 1

"Most avulsions are naturally occurring shifts in rivers. This is the first avulsion of a very large river tied to an earthquake," said Michael Steckler, a geophysicist at the Columbia Climate School in the US and a study team member.

"The (Ganga) river shifted from flowing to the southeast along a pathway parallel but south of the current Ganges-Padma rivers to flowing down the Bhagirathi-Hooghly channel," Steckler told this newspaper via email.

The earthquake had caused the Ganga's main channel to shift westward to a north-south flow. However, under the influence of changes in land elevation, the river has moved since the earthquake into its current modern channel.

Sometime between 1550 and 1650, the river changed course and moved eastwards, and joined the modern lower Meghna channel. "These later avulsions occurred over decades and were not triggered by earthquakes," Steckler said.

The researchers say the earthquake 2,500 years ago may have been caused either by the slip of the oceanic crust under the continental plate below Bangladesh, Myanmar and northeastern India, or by the slip of the Indian plate beneath the Asian plate in the Himalayan region.

An earlier 2016 study by Akhter and US collaborators found that these zones were building stress that could produce earthquakes comparable to the one 2,500 years ago. A high-intensity earthquake in 1762 had generated a tsunami that moved up the river and hit Dhaka.

The Ganga-Brahmaputra delta landscape sits atop a large pile of mud layers — sediments ferried by the rivers downstream from the Himalayas into the delta — as deep as 30km thick. The mud is vulnerable to liquefaction, a process in which water-saturated mud layers behave like a liquid.

"The potential for large-magnitude earthquakes in the nearby Himalaya and Burmese fronts... is high," Akhter said.

"The effects of strong shaking from such an earthquake would affect much of the country, including the densely populated Dhaka. Large earthquakes occur less frequently than serious floods but they can affect much larger areas and can have long-lasting economic, social and political effects," he said.

It is unclear how the Ganga's abrupt change in course 2,500 years ago may have impacted local communities, said Chamberlain, who specialises in research on how rivers change course and impact local communities.

"We can presume that the event would have led to some shift in populations, emergence of new settlements – archaeological work may provide the answer," Chamberlain said.

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Rajasthan Marwad (8D) • Rajasthan Mewad (9D)
Wonders of Kerala (8D) • Nainital Mussoorie Haridwar (6D)
50,000 to 75,000
Kashmir Escape (5D) • Gujarat with Statue of Unity (10D)
Delhi Agra Haridwar Rishikesh (8D)
Sikkim Darjeeling Gangtok (7D)
Highlights of Ladakh (7D) • Best of Andaman (7D)
Best of Madhya Pradesh (9D) • Best of Nepal (8D)
Highlights of Thailand (4D) • Best of Thailand (6D)
75,000 to 1 Lakh
Best of Kashmir (8D) • Lahaul Spiti Chandrataal (12D)
All of Meghalaya (8D) • Best of Ladakh (9D)
Best of Bhutan (9D) • Best of Sri Lanka (7D)
Highlights of Dubai Abu Dhabi (5D)
Highlights of Vietnam (5D) • Best of Singapore (4D)
1 Lakh to 1.25 Lakh
Assam Arunachal Meghalaya (12D)
All of Madhya Pradesh (17D)
Leh Ladakh Manali Kashmir (15D)
Bangkok Pattaya Phuket Krabi (8D) • Best of Bali (7D)
Best of Baku Azerbaijan (7D)
Best of Dubai Abu Dhabi (7D) • Best of Qatar (5D)
1.25 Lakh to 1.5 Lakh
Best of Vietnam (8D) • Singapore Malaysia (7D)
Chiang Mai Chiang Rai Phuket Krabi (9D)
Best of Oman (7D) • Best of Mauritius (7D)
Highlights of South Korea (5D)
1.5 Lakh to 2 Lakh
Highlights of Turkey (7D) • Saudi Arabia (7D)
Uzbekistan Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan (9D)
North East Seven Sisters (21D)
Gujarat to Guwahati Road Trip (30D)
Singapore Thailand Malaysia (10D)
Vietnam Cambodia (10D) • Philippines Manila Cebu (8D)
Hong Kong Macao Shenzhen (7D) • Australia (7D)
2 Lakh to 2.25 Lakh
Vienna Prague Budapest Bratislava (8D)
European Panorama (8D) • Austria Italy (8D)
European Getaway (9D) • Best of Turkey (10D)
Baltic Europe - Estonia Latvia Lithuania (8D)
Best of Japan (7D)
Best of Kenya (7D) • Best of South Africa (9D)
2.25 Lakh to 2.5 Lakh
Best of Italy (8D) • Highlights of Greece (8D)
Best of Spain (10D) • Swiss Austria (8D)
European Escape (8D) • South Korea (8D)
Best of Switzerland (8D) • Spain La Tomatina (11D)
All of Vietnam (13D)
2.5 Lakh to 3 Lakh
Japan Korea (9D) • USA East Coast (7D)
Croatia Slovenia Slovakia Hungary (11D)
England Scotland Amsterdam Brussels (10D)
Spain Portugal (13D) • Swiss Austria Italy (11D)
Best of Greece (10D) • Tunisia Malta Sicily (10D)
3 Lakh to 3.5 Lakh
Best of Australia (9D) • Best of New Zealand (10D)
California Carnival (9D)
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Best of Scandinavia(9D) 290000 - 300000
Iceland Scandinavia (14D)465000 - 480000
Scandinavia Northern Lights (9D)375000-385000
Scandinavia Eastern Europe(23D)525000-545000
Eastern Europe(8D/11D/15D) 200000 - 310000
Antarctica Australia Africa America
Antarctica-The 7th Continent(13D)Dec11 - 1275000
Australia (7D/9D/14D) 200000-450000
New Zealand (10D/14D) 335000 - 450000
Australia New Zealand (17D)540000-565000
America USA (13D/15D/19D) 450000 - 665000
USA East Coast (7D) 275000 - 290000
California Carnival USA (9D) Aug 3 - 354000 - 365000
Best of South Africa (9D) 210000-230000
Best of Kenya (7D) 210000 - 230000
Tanzania Zanzibar (10D) 360000
Best of Mauritius (7D) 140000 - 150000
Dubai Abu Dhabi (5D/7D) 97000 - 130000
Best of Saudi Arabia (7D) Oct 19 - 185000
Best of Qatar (5D) 125000
Best of Oman (7D) Dec 4 - 135000
Bhutan (9D/12D) 80000 - 100000
Nepal/Sri Lanka (8D/7D) 70000-100000
South East & Far East Asia
Singapore Thailand Malaysia (10D) 160000-170000
Singapore Malaysia Bali (10D) 185000-195000
Singapore Malaysia+Cruise(9D) 180000-190000
Singapore Malaysia (7D) 135000-145000
Singapore Bali (8D) 165000 - 175000
Vietnam (5D/10D Cambodia) 90000-185000
Best of Bali (7D) 125000 - 135000
Best of Singapore (4D) 100000 - 115000
Best of Thailand (6D) 70000 - 85000
Bangkok Pattaya Phuket Krabi (8D) 125000 - 130000
Chiang Mai Chiang Rai Phuket Krabi(9D)150000
Philippines Manila Cebu (8D) Jan 14 - 195000
Hong Kong Macao Shenzhen(7D) 155000-170000
Japan (7D/11D) 220000 - 365000
Japan Korea (9D/12D Taiwan) 295000 - 350000
Korea Taiwan (7D/11D) 215000 - 290000
South Korea (5D/8D) 150000 - 235000
Durga Puja Special
Highlights of Kashmir(6D) Oct 10-67K
Rajasthan Marwad (8D) Oct 13 - 63000
Wonders of Kerala (8D)Oct 12 - 63000
Bangkok Pattaya Phuket Krabi (8D) Oct 12 - 116000
Singapore Thailand Malaysia (10D) Oct 11 - 161000
Vietnam Cambodia(10D)Oct 11-176000
Best of Japan(7D) Oct 13 - 223000
European Panorama(8D)Oct 14-216000
European Jewels (15D)Oct 11-366000
Best of Switzerland(8D)Oct 12-261000
Vienna Prague Budapest Bratislava (8D) Oct 16 - 211000
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1 INJURED AS BIKE SKIDS OFF EM BYPASS

GOVT SEEKS BANK DETAILS FROM COLLEGES P9 ● JU RAGGING: 'SLOW' ACTION SLAMMED P8

CALCUTTA TUESDAY 18 JUNE 2024 XXCE

GOOD MORNING

EVENT

■ Echoes Of The Earth at Bridging Culture And Arts Foundation, Regent Estate, 4pm to 8pm. (Till June 27)

Fire at SSKM

■ **CALCUTTA:** A cable wire caught fire outside the OPD of Bangur Institute of Neurosciences in the SSKM Hospital compound on Monday afternoon, police said. One fire tender was sent to douse the flames. No one was trapped or injured, the police said.

Motorcycle skids

■ **CHINGRIGHATA:** A 21-year-old motorcyclist was injured after the two-wheeler skidded off the carriageway of EM Bypass, near the Chingrighata crossing, on Monday morning. Mosharaf Hossain was admitted to the NRS hospital. Hossain was wearing a helmet, police said.

Skill training

■ **CALCUTTA:** Adamas University recently hosted a 15-day skill development programme on translational research, bio-innovation and entrepreneurship. Supported by BIRAC and held at the E-YUVA Centre, more than 60 students from Bengal's colleges participated in the programme.

Found dead

■ **PRAGATI MAIDAN:** A 20-year-old woman was found hanging in her house on Hatgachia Road on Monday morning. Police said Priya Singh was declared dead at the NRS Medical College and Hospital. No suicide note was found, the police said.

YESTERDATE

June 18, 1812

■ On this day, Baptist missionary William Carey met pioneer American missionaries to India, Samuel and Harriet Newell, Adoniram and Ann Judson, Samuel and Rosanna Nott and Gordon Hall, after they had landed in Calcutta.

They had been sent by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. But when they reached Calcutta, the British East India Company ordered them to leave. The company believed that missionary activity would adversely affect its trade.

The Newells left for Mauritius. During the difficult voyage, the 19-year-old Harriet gave birth, but the child died. Harriet died soon after landing. An account of her life written by her husband became celebrated in the United States.

Samuel later came to Bombay, where, with fellow missionaries, he inaugurated the first American overseas mission.

Chandrima S. Bhattacharya

For suggestions on dates/ events mail us at: yesterdate@abp.in

WEATHER

YESTERDAY

Maximum: 36.2°C (+2.4)

Minimum: 30.2°C (+3.2)

RAINFALL: Nil

HUMIDITY: Max: 88%, Min: 62%

THE FORECAST

Maximum 36°C | Minimum 30°C

EXPECTED: Thundershower

SUNSET 6.23pm | SUNRISE 4.52am

2 city residents among train crash victims

MONALISA CHAUDHURI

Calcutta: Two city residents — Shankar Mohan Das, 62, and Shubhojit Mali, 33 — were among the passengers of the Sealdah-bound Kanchenjunga Express who were killed after a goods train rammed into it from behind near Rangapani station, around 10km from New Jalpaiguri station.

Das, a resident of Canal Circular Road in Kankurgachhi, had retired from the railways two years ago but was given an extension in service.

He had left home early on Sunday to catch a train to Siliguri. The Railway Mail Service employee was returning to Calcutta with "mails and posts" when he met with the accident, family members said.

"He had left home around 5.30am on Sunday. He was supposed to return today. His duty required him to travel on and off to collect mails and posts and return to the city," said cousin Kushal Das.

The cousin said Das had retired from the railways two years ago but was given an extension.

Kushal, a Jadavpur resident, said Das's younger brother Dipankar was the first in the family to know about the tragedy.

"He called me in the morning to inform me about the accident. He and my elder nephew (Shankar Das's elder son) Subhankar immediately left for north Bengal by road," Kushal said.

Das is survived by his 85-year-old mother Kajol Rani, wife Swapna and two sons — Subhankar and Shubham.

Subhankar is married and works at a private office in Calcutta. Subham is an engineer and works in Indore.

Neighbours and friends who gathered outside the house in Kankurgachhi said Das was a "jovial" person and "respected" by all.

"He was a very good man. He was active and agile. We heard about the shocking news. It is still hard to believe that he is no more," said a neighbour.

"Who will take responsibility for the accident and the deaths? We have lost a son. Whatever be the cause of the accident, no one can compensate for our loss," said a distraught Suresh Mohan Das, an uncle of the victim.

Shankar Mohan Das

Shubhojit Mali

"Once our family members reach the spot, they will complete the formalities related to the claiming of the body. After that the post-mortem will be done. The body will then be released."

Family members said Das's younger brother and elder son would reach the accident spot late on Monday and try to expedite the post-mortem.

"His (Das's) wife is too shocked to speak. She has not uttered a word since hearing the news. We are very concerned about her health," said Kushal.

Mali, a resident of Jamir Lane in Ballygunge, was travelling with a friend named Surya Shekhar Panda. The friend was critically injured in the accident.

It was through Panda's family that the news of Mali's death reached his home on Monday afternoon.

Mail is survived by his parents, wife, two children, a brother and sister-in-law.

"He drove and delivered cars for a living. He went in a car and was returning by train," said his wife.

Mali's daughter is 11, while his son is 18 months' old.

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee, who reached the accident spot on Monday evening, said the government is trying to arrange all the logistics for the transportation and treatment of the deceased and the injured.

Railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has announced a compensation of ₹10 lakh for the family of each of the deceased, ₹2.5 lakh for those who suffered serious injuries and ₹50,000 for those who suffered minor injuries.

An enquiry and assistance counter at Sealdah station on Monday. Pictures by Bishwarup Dutta

Railway help kiosks at Sealdah

DEBRAJ MITRA AND SAMARPITA BANERJEE

Calcutta: Railway authorities set up enquiry and assistance booths at Sealdah and Howrah stations in the wake of the Kanchenjunga Express crash.

The helpline numbers at Sealdah station kept buzzing throughout the day. While a section of the callers enquired about relatives and friends on the ill-fated train, many others called to check about possible diversions and schedules of trains they were supposed to board.

A handful of people came to Sealdah station, frantically looking for information on passengers on the Kanchenjunga Express.

Ajit Mishra, 29, was one of them. Mishra, who came from Salt Lake, was looking for information on his elder brother Biswapratap Mishra who was on the train.

His brother was travelling from Guwahati to Sealdah. His ticket was not confirmed initially. He boarded the train at the last moment.

"I called him at 7.30am (on Monday). That was the last time we spoke. I saw the gory pictures of the crash on TV and tried calling him several times. But the call would not go through. That is why I came here," said Mishra.

A police help desk at Sealdah station on Monday
■ Train disruption after collision, Page 9

At the assistance counter, a railway employee shared the emergency helpline of NJP station with Mishra. Till late on Monday, Mishra could not establish contact with his brother.

"I will stay here until the train arrives from north Bengal," said Mishra.

The spokesperson of Eastern Railway said the Kanchenjunga Express left the accident site — without the two affected rear coaches — around 12.40pm. It is supposed to reach Sealdah early on Tuesday.

The telephone lines at the assistance counters kept ringing non-stop. Many callers asked about the status of the train and when was it expected to leave the accident site. The reservation chart of the train, with the list of passengers, was laid out on a table in front of them.

Many other callers wanted to know about possible cancellations and diversions.

Shampa Mallik, a New Alipore resident, came to the counter with her son. She was due to travel to Alipurduar where her husband is posted, on the Teesta-Torsa Express.

"I am very anxious. But the man at the counter told me that the train should leave on time," Mallik told **Metro**.

The Teesta-Torsa Express left Sealdah at the scheduled departure of 3pm on Monday.

A bunch of trains between NJP and Malda were cancelled and many more had to be diverted because of the accident. Some of the diverted trains are:

■ New Jalpaiguri-Udaipur City Weekly Express
■ Dibrugarh-New Delhi Rajdhani Express
■ Sealdah-New Alipurduar Padatik Express
■ Howrah-NJP Vande Bharat
■ Guwahati-Howrah Saraighat Express
■ Guwahati-Bangalore Express
■ NJP-Howrah Vande Bharat
■ Dibrugarh-Howrah Kamrup Express
■ Bamanhat-Sealdah Uttar Banga Express
■ New Alipurduar-Sealdah Teesta Torsa Express
■ Haldibari-Sealdah Darjeeling Mail
■ New Alipurduar-Sealdah Padatik

Gangster wants me to lead syndicate: Realtor

KINSUK BASU

Calcutta: Ajay Mandal, the realtor who had a close shave when the car he was travelling in came under fire on Saturday afternoon, said he has received a third call from a man claiming to be Subodh Singh, a gangster lodged in a Bihar jail.

The man is said to have told Mandal that he wants to set up a syndicate of realtors in Titagarh, on the northern fringes of the city, and wants him to lead it.

Mandal said he rejected the offer and added that Saturday afternoon's bullet shower on his Volvo car on BT Road, at Rathtala, was aimed at threatening him to accept the offer.

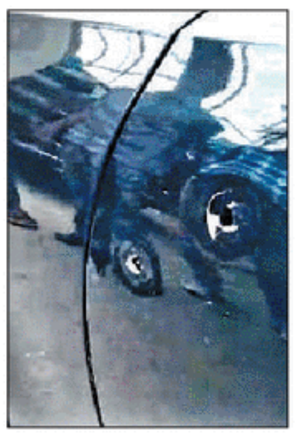
According to the realtor, the man claiming to be Singh made the first call on Saturday evening, when Mandal was at Belgharia police station. He apparently told Mandal that had he wanted, all the bullets that hit the car would have been pumped into him.

The second call came on Sunday afternoon. This time the caller asked the realtor to cooperate with him if he wanted to get protection from all goons. The third call came later on Sunday.

"I have considerable sway among realtors in Titagarh," Mandal told **Metro** on Monday.

"Subodh called me to say he wanted me to lead a syndicate of realtors. He told me if I accept the offer I won't have to pay protection money to anyone. Why? Because *'tumhare picchey* Subodh Singh *khara hain* (Subodh Singh will be beside you)."

Mandal said: "He wanted to threaten me to surrender and hence, the attack on my car. I told him I couldn't accept the offer."



Bullet holes on the Volvo car that came under fire at the Rathtala crossing on BT Road on Saturday

Till late on Monday evening, the police could not trace the origin of the three calls. No one has been arrested yet in connection with Saturday's attack.

"The man claiming to be Singh called Mandal using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). VoIP service providers usually assign phone numbers dynamically. Which means the number showing on the caller ID may not even match the VoIP device being used," said a senior police officer.

"Such calls are routed through a network of servers. So it becomes even more difficult to trace the origin of the calls."

Mandal said Singh wanted to control major real estate projects in and around Titagarh, Barrackpore and Sodepur, where the businessman has developed a number of projects.

The police said Singh, lodged in Patna's Beur Correctional Home, has multiple cases of extortion and murder against him.

"To start with, Subodh Singh wants me to control his real estate projects. Tomorrow, it may be something else. Why will I agree to such deals? If needed, I will fold up my business," Mandal said.

"Earlier, I would walk down from Titagarh to Barrackpore close to midnight after attending functions and parties. I never felt scared. But now the situation has changed."

A resident of Nonchandanpukur in Barrackpore, Mandal escaped unscathed on Saturday as two bike-borne men overtook his Volvo S90 at Rathtala on BT Road, barely a kilometre from Dunlop, and sprayed bullets on the left side of the car.

Mandal was sitting beside the driver, on the left of the vehicle.

On Monday, the Barrackpore Police Commissionerate posted two constables at Mandal's house.

Mandal owns several showrooms of two-wheelers and also runs real-estate projects in Barrackpore, Sodepur and Titagarh in North 24-Parganas and Domjur in Howrah.

On Saturday, he said he was on his way to the Domjur project when bike-borne attackers fired at his car.

"It is difficult to run a business with two police constables around me. Business partners or even my relatives would feel intimidated seeing the constables," Mandal said. "My daughter asked me why we have policemen around all the time."

Mandal said his family was considering leaving Barrackpore for good and shifting to their ancestral home in Nadia's Tehatta.

Barrackpore's newly elected Trinamool Congress MP Partha Bhowmik called on the Mandals on Sunday night and assured them of all help.

IIT student found hanging at hostel

SUBHANKAR CHOWDHURY

Kharagpur: A third-year BTech student at IIT Kharagpur was found hanging on the Sarojini Naidu/Indira Gandhi Hall of Residence premises on the campus on Monday morning, officials of the institute said.

Devika Pillai was a third-year student of the department of bioscience and biotechnology, the officials said.

She was from Kerala and held the post of general secretary, social and cultural, Sarojini Naidu/Indira Gandhi Hall.

Officials said she was found hanging on the terrace of the hostel.

The institute said in a statement issued on Monday: "Upon discovery of the incident, the campus security and medical teams were immediately alerted. District police authorities have been informed. Her family has also been informed immediately."

"The police are conducting a thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding Pillai's death. The institute is fully cooperating with the authorities," the statement said.

The IIT said it is "committed to the well-being and mental health" of the students.

"We have a range of support services available, including counselling and mental health resources, and we urge students to utilise these services whenever needed. Our thoughts and prayers are with Ms Pillai's family and friends during this time of profound loss," the statement reads.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 ▶

WORK FROM HOME OR OTHER LOCATIONS

Employees of offices at Acropolis leave with their computers and other items on Monday. Pictures by Pradip Sanyal

Staff of offices in Acropolis shift computers, files

SUBHAJOY ROY

Calcutta: Several people who work in the Acropolis building took away computers and laptops from their offices on Monday as they started working from other places or from home.

A group of employees of a retail store of readymade garments was taking away files, computers, laptops and CPUs from their eighth-floor office on Monday. The brand's back office, HR and accounts departments, among others, operated from the building.

"We will work from another office of our company at Tangra. We will set up the computers and laptops there. We are not sure when we will be able to come back here," said a man who came out with a monitor.

Another employee of the company said it was difficult to climb nine floors and bring down the necessary items. Since power supply has not been restored, the elevators were not operating.

A fire broke out at Acropolis on Friday. The building has two sections — one that has the mall and another section with offices. The authorities of Acropolis said that the fire was restricted to the mall and the section from where the offices ran has remained unaffected. There were 99 offices and a pub on the terrace of this section.

Abhishek Kar, who works for a company with an office on the 13th floor, said they were working from homes. "We have instructions to work from home on Monday and Tuesday. We will be informed about what to do from Wednesday," said Kar. The company Kar works for has their eastern region head office at Acropolis.

He added that many employees did not have laptops and were unable to access files saved on the desktops in office. The files relate to stocks and payments.

Ramendra Nath Mukherjee, who works for an advertising agency that has its office at Acropolis, said that employees were being allowed to visit the offices after signing a register on the ground floor.

"They were also allowed to take away computers and laptops," he said.

The Acropolis authorities have written to the fire brigade seeking to reopen the section of the building that has offices and has not been affected by Friday's fire.

A senior fire brigade officer said the section with offices has a separate power connection and the mall authorities must get it audited by an electrical inspector before the reopening.

The chief electrical inspector (of the state power department) has to first certify that the section is safe for reopening, he said. The fire brigade, too, will conduct checks before agreeing to the reopening.

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Page29/AJ/0624

IIT student

▶ FROM PAGE 6

An IIT official said they would conduct an inquiry to find out the cause of the death.

"We need to find out whether she had any mental health issues or whether some other reasons were responsible for the death. Her parents have arrived. We will speak to them," said an IIT official.

This newspaper reported on October 23, 2021, that the IIT Kharagpur authorities had advised teachers to interact with the students frequently, not just about academics but also about their mental health and general well-being.

The then dean of students, Dhrubajyoti Sen, had issued the advisory on October 22, 2021, after two students committed suicide at their homes a few weeks apart.

Pillai was pursuing a summer internship under a professor in-charge, department of bioscience and biotechnology, the statement said.

The additional superintendent of police, Kharagpur, Sandip Sen said: "We will know the reasons behind the death once the post-mortem report comes. The family has not lodged any complaint."

Executive council member writes to VC over ragging

JU's 'go-slow' approach slammed

SUBHANKAR CHOWDHURY

Jadavpur: A member of Jadavpur University's executive council has written to the vice-chancellor, accusing the university of adopting a "go-slow" approach on the issue of taking action against those who were found responsible in the university's inquiry into ragging a first-year student last year.

Kazi Masum Akhtar, the member of the university's highest decision-making body, has sought to know from the VC why the authorities could not act on the decision which was adopted at the meeting of the executive council held on May 24 on the issue of ragging.

The JU anti-ragging committee's recommendations stated the permanent rustication of four students who were found to be present and "fully involved in ragging either on the spot on the night of 9th August 2023 or/and before it".

The committee, which based its recommendation on the findings of the university's anti-ragging squad, also recommended the rustication of five students for four semesters and their expulsion from the JU hostel permanently as they "were found to be directly associated with criminal conspiracy to rag".

The first-year undergraduate student died in the early hours of August 10, 2023.

However, the university has yet to act on the committee's recommendations.

"Why is the university adopting a go-slow approach against those who have been found guilty of ragging the first-year student in the university's own probe?" wrote Akhtar.

"It has been close to a year since the death of a first-year student in the hostel because of an alleged ragging....When you assumed responsibilities as VC, you vowed to curb ragging. Unfortunately, the university is not taking any steps...."

The committee's report meeting also says that the dean of students did not go to the JU main hostel on the night of August 9 last year despite getting a distress call about the first-year student who died a few hours later.

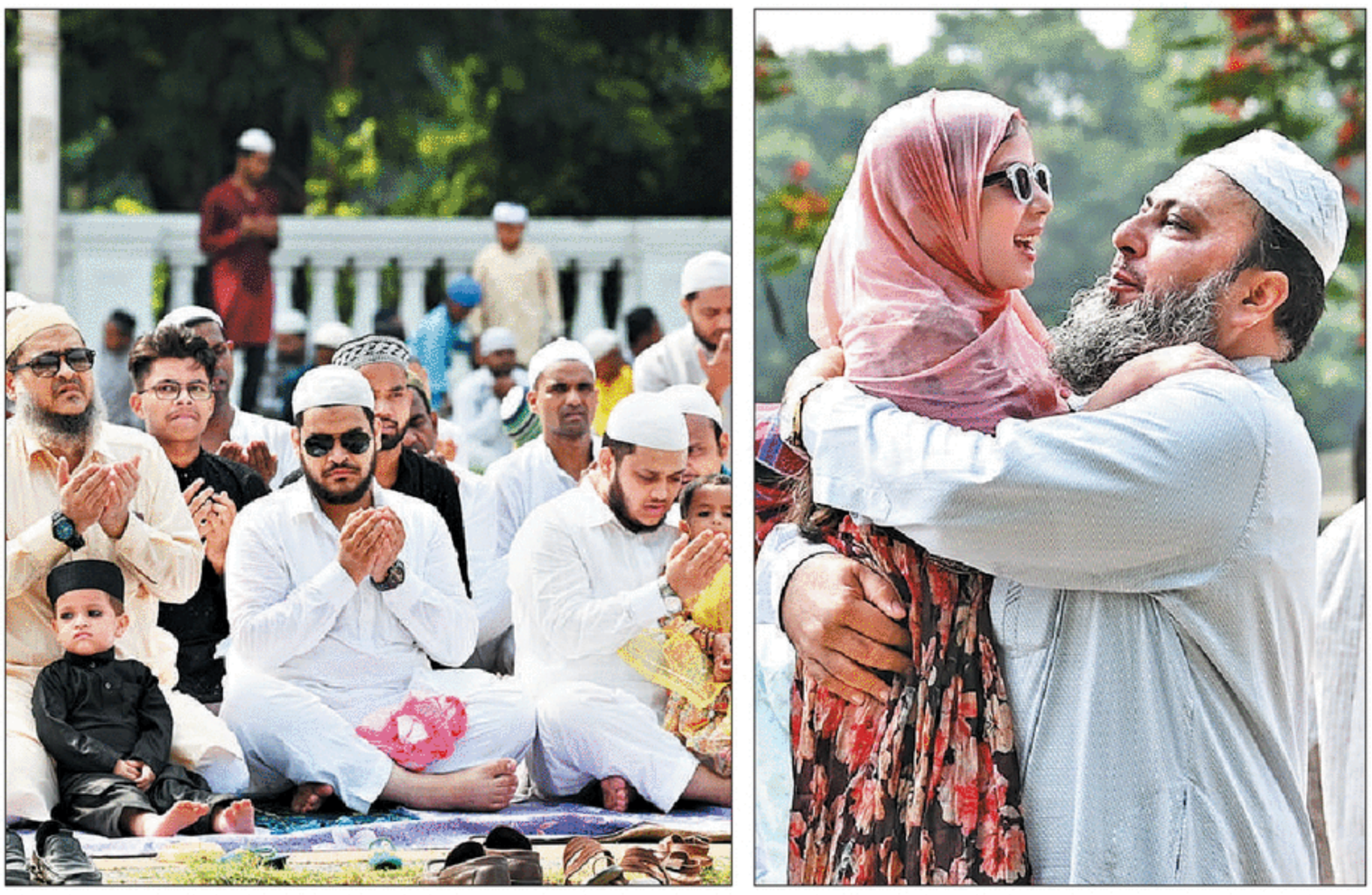
The report said JU's dean of students had failed to understand the "gravity of the situation in the hostel" even after a resident alerted him over the phone about trouble in the main hostel on the night of August 9, hours before a first-year student fell to his death, says an internal probe.

"Why did the executive council not take any steps against him?" the executive council member wrote.

The university in its last council meeting announced a prize in the memory of the deceased student. But by delaying actions against those who stand guilty for the death of the student, the university is dishonouring the memory, he said.

JU's interim VC Bhaskar Gupta said: "I have not gone through the letter. Actions will be taken in accordance with law."

PRAYERS OFFERED AND GREETINGS EXCHANGED



Eid al-Adha prayers and greetings on Red Road on Monday morning. Pictures by Bishwarup Dutta

Faulty lights make Salt Lake roads unsafe

A stretch of the Broadway with no functional street lights at 8pm on Sunday

A dark stretch of the First Cross Road that leads to the Labony Island from Bidhannagar College at 8.30pm on Sunday

SNEHAL SENGUPTA

Salt Lake: A large number of street lights have stopped working in several areas of Salt Lake across all three sectors.

Salt Lake has 72 blocks spread across three sectors and nearly every block has roads that are lined with street lights that do not function.

Driving or walking in Salt Lake is fraught with risk even in areas with working street lights as large canopies of trees prevent the light from the poles from illuminating the roads. The problem gets compounded since many of these stretches are ridden with craters and potholes.

At night the potholes are near impossible to spot and motorists have to rely solely only on the headlights of their vehicles.

On Sunday, **Metro** drove around the township and found that street lights had stopped working in multiple stretches in all three sectors.

All the street lights on the stretch of the First Cross Road that leads to the Labony Island from Bidhannagar College have stopped working.

Another road where dysfunctional lights have not been restored for the past several months is the Eastern Drainage Canal Road which leads to the Chingrighata intersection from Salt Lake.

This road goes past several residential blocks including EE, FB, KB, KC, and IC and housing complexes such as Mahavir Vikas, and Jal Vayu Vihar among others.

Stretches of the Broadway — that links the township with EM Bypass— also have several stretches where lights have stopped working.

Another stretch of the First Cross Road that leads into Salt Lake from the New Town-bound flank of the Salt Lake Bypass also doesn't have a single street light that works.

This road is one of the main entry and exit points of Salt Lake and every day thousands of vehicles use this road to get into Salt Lake after exiting Chingrighata flyover.

In Salt Lake's three sectors, there are street lights every 20-25m on the main roads and the roads that criss-cross every block. A majority of these lights — some of which had been converted to LED — have stopped working.

Nearly all the poles are wrapped up in cables of every kind. Most are bent while many list over dangerously on the roads because of their weight. The area in front of Calcutta University's Salt Lake campus is a prime example of this.

The road that leads from the Amul Island to the Canal Bank Road of the Eastern Drainage Canal has multiple dysfunctional street lights.

The Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation (BMC) is in charge of street light repairs and maintenance while the electric supply lines and cable maintenance are taken care of by the West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (WBSEDCL).

Sabyasachi Dutta, the chairperson of the BMC, admitted that several street lights don't work.

"Several residents have complained to me about the lights. I have forwarded them to the electrical department for repairs at the earliest," Dutta said.

Krishna Chakraborty, the mayor of the civic body, said that workmen and supervisors from the electrical department are conducting street light repairs.

According to Chakraborty each of the 41 wards will also get 20 more street lights in areas where they are required.

"We have already started repairing the street lights. In addition to this, each Ward will get 20 additional street lights," said Chakraborty.

A senior WBSEDCL officer said that their teams conduct regular checks on street light feeders and there are no issues with the electric supply. WBSEDCL supplies electricity to street lights and is also responsible for cable maintenance.

"Our supply lines are working fine. The street lights are not working as they need maintenance as several LED posts and other lighting systems have defunct bulbs and LEDs," said the official.

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
e-TENDER NOTICE
e-Tender is invited by the Assistant Engineer, Barasat Sub-Division, PHE Dte. on behalf of Governor of West Bengal vide Ref. No. WB/PHED/AE/BSD/NIeT-02/2024-25 & ID: 2024_PHED_693030_1 to 10 for different works. Details will be available in the website: www.wbtenders.gov.in The last date for submission of tender is 28.06.2024 upto 14:00 Hours. Sd/- Assistant Engineer, Barasat Sub-Division, PHE Dte. ICA- T8963(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
Notice Inviting e-Quotation
eN.I.Q. No. 03 of 2024-2025
Quotation for work from bonafide bidders as per GO are invited by the Executive Engineer, PWD, Berhampore Division No.-I. Details may be obtained from office during working hours and also from http://www.pwdwb.in/ https://wbtenders.gov.in Name of the work: Engagement of 14 (Fourteen) Nos. Unskilled Security Guard / Watchman / Durwan at the different Stackyard, Offices, Inspection Bungalow etc. under the jurisdiction of Berhampore Division No-I, PWD in the District of Murshidabad during the year 2024-25. Tender ID: 2024_PWD_692508_1. Bid submission starting date: 18.06.2024 at 11.30 a.m. onwards. Bid Submission end date: 03.07.2024 upto 11.30 a.m. N.B. Any corrigendum/ and addendum, if issued for this eNIQ will be published in Online mode only. Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD Berhampore Division No.-I
ICA- T8944(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
TENDER NOTICE
e-Tender is invited for 8 nos. of work by the Executive Engineer, North 24 Parganas Division, Social Sector, PWDte. for and on behalf of the Governor of West Bengal Vide N.I.T. No. WBSSPWD 03 EE/24PN/2024-25. (1) Urgent Repair and maintenance of cabin room..... Ashoknagar state General Hospital in the District of North 24 Parganas. Estimated Amount Rs. 750158, I.D. 2024_WBPWD_691800_1, (2) Roof Treatment work along with some maintenance .. Habra S.G.H. in the district of North 24 Parganas. Estimated Amount Rs. 913323, I.D. 2024_WBPWD_691800_2, (3) Repair and maintenance work of different toilet block A. S G H. in the district of North 24 Parganas. Estimated Amount Rs. 591873, I.D. 2024_WBPWD_691800_3, (4) Repair and S & P works of main OPD Building of Biswanathpur R.H at in the district of North 24 Parganas, Estimated Amount Rs. 513486, I.D. 2024_WBPWD_691800_4, (5) Minor Repairing Works in the campuses of P.C.S Govt. School, Barasat Govt. College in the District of North 24 Parganas. Estimated Amount Rs. 698517, I.D. 2024_WBPWD_691800_5. (6) Roof treatment work of main hospital building of Ghoshpur Rural Hospital, North 24 Parganas (RIVERINE 22.5%). Estimated Amount Rs. 1254765, I.D. 2024_WBPWD_691800_6, (7) Painting of Main building and Laboratory building P.R.Thakur Govt. College North 24 Parganas. Estimated Amount Rs. 2916781, I.D. 2024_WBPWD_691800_7 (8) Special Repair and Renovation of Campus road.....P.R. Thakur Govt. College at Thakumagar in the District of North 24 Parganas (2nd Call). Estimated Amount Rs. 2904512, I.D. 2024_WBPWD_691800_8. Bid Submission end date and time (online) 04.07.2024 upto 11.00 Hrs. IST. All other information will be available from the office of the Executive Engineer, North 24 Parganas Division, Social Sector, P.W.Dte. & e-Tender website : https://wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer, North 24 Parganas Division, Social Sector, P.W.Dte.
ICA- T8937(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE
EE/KNHED/PWDte. invite online e-tender for the work "Annual maintenance & Servicing of Chiller units in walk-in coolers at I.B.T.M. & I.H., Maniktala." e-NIT No. WBPWD/EE/KNHED/NIQ-16/2024-25. Tender Id : 2024_WBPWD_692500_1. Bid Submission Start Date (online) : 20/06/2024, 1.05 PM. Bid Submission Closing Date (online) : 26/06/2024 upto 1.00 PM. Corrigendum if any will be Published in website only. Details of NIT and Tender Documents may be download from http://wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- S. Chakraborty/EE/KNHED/PW Dte/ Govt. of WB ICA- T8942(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
e-TENDER NOTICE
e-Tenders are invited by the Assistant Engineer, Jhargram Sub-Division, PHE Dte. on behalf of Governor of West Bengal vide Ref. No. eNIT No. 01 of AE/JSD of 2024-25, (Tender ID: 2024_PHED_692661_1 to 10) and eNIT No. 02 of AE/JSD of 2024-25, (Tender ID: 2024_PHED_692938_1 to 02) for works in Jhargram District. Details will be available in the website wbtenders.gov.in The last date for submission of tender is 25.06.2024 upto 18:00 Hours. Sd/- Assistant Engineer, Jhargram Sub-Division, PHE Dte.
ICA- T8962(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
e-TENDER NOTICE
Tender ID: 2024_PHED_693518_(1)
WBPHE/EE/JMD/NIeT 03 OF 2024-2025
Ref: Memo No. 3458/JMD, dated 13.06.2024
The Executive Engineer, Jhargram Mechanical Division, PHE Dte. has invited open e-Tender for the work (Sl. no. 1) as mentioned in the respective NIeT. Last date of submission 03.07.2024. For details please visit www.wbtenders.gov.in & the departmental website i.e. www.wbphed.gov.in and Office Notice Board. Sd/- EE/JMD, PHE Dte.
ICA- T8975(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
e-TENDER NOTICE
e-Tenders are invited by the Executive Engineer, South 24-Pgs. W/S Division-I, PHE Dte. vide Ref. No. 52/2023-2024/EE/SWD-I/WBPHED/2nd call and ID: 2024_PHED_693362_1 to 3 for works related to Land Development, Construction of approach road & others allied works in Jaynagar-I block under SWD-I, PHE Dte. Details will be available in the website: http://wbtenders.gov.in The last date for submission of tender is 02/07/2024 upto 3.00 PM. Sd/- for Executive Engineer, South 24-Pgs. W/S Division-I, P.H.E Dte. ICA- T8971(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
e-TENDER NOTICE
e-Tenders are invited by the Executive Engineer, South 24-Pgs. W/S Division-I, PHE Dte. vide Ref. No. 03/2024-2025/EE/SWD-I/WBPHED and ID: 2024_PHED_693261_1 for Repair of Pneumatic Cylinder, Chlorinator (No.3) and Compressor (No.2) in Dakshin Roypur Water Treatment Plant (34MGD) under SWD-I, PHE Dte. Details will be available in the website: http://wbtenders.gov.in The last date for submission of tender is 02/07/2024 upto 3.00 PM. Sd/- for Executive Engineer, South 24-Pgs. W/S Division-I, P.H.E Dte. ICA- T8969(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
Abridged e-Tender Notice
e-Tender are invited e-NIT-01/WBCAMPA/DFO/DJ/2024-25, 01/WBSFDA/DFO/DJ/2024-25, 02/WBSFDA/DFO/DJ/2024-25, 02/WBSFDA/DFO/DJ/2024-25, 01/WBFBCCCF/DFO/DJ/2023-24 (Second Call) under different scheme, other detailed information / downloading / uploading may be done from the website: www.wbtenders.gov.in and are available at Divisional Forest Officer, Darjeeling Division, Bara Kakjhora, D.B Giri Road, Darjeeling on 18.06.2024. Sd/- J. Sheik Fareed, IFS, Divisional Forest Officer, Darjeeling Division.
ICA- T8858(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE
EE/KNHED/PWDte. invite online e-tender for the work "Annual maintenance & Servicing of Different type of air conditioner within the ID&BG Hospital Beliaghata, Kolkata." e-NIT No. WBPWD/EE/KNHED/NIQ-10/2024-25, Tender Id :- 2024_WBPWD_691576_1. Bid Submission Start Date (online) : 19/06/2024, 1.05 PM. Bid Submission Closing Date (online) : 04/07/2024 upto 1.00 PM. Corrigendum if any will be Published in website only. Details of NIT and Tender Documents may be download from http://wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- S. Chakraborty/EE/KNHED/PW Dte/ Govt. of WB ICA- T8939(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
e-N.I.T. No-WBIW/EE/KCD2/eNIT-03/2024-25
On behalf of the Governor of W.B., the Executive Engineer, Kangsabati Canals Division-II, Khatra invites online e-tender. Online bid submission end date:- 26.06.2024 till 11:00 Hours IST. Details may be seen in the website www.wbtenders.gov.in and www.wbiwd.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer, Kangsabati Canals Division-II, Khatra.
ICA- T8890(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
Notice Inviting e-Quotation
No. WBPWD/SS/EE/Bir/e-NIQ-01/2024-25 (Tender ID-2024_WBPWD_692834_1)
The Ex. Engr., Birbhum Divn. P.W.(S.S) Dte. Invites online Tenders from Bonafide resourceful outsider having credential in similar nature of work for "Providing Unarmed trained security guard (Skilled-10nos., Semi-skilled-16 nos., Unskilled-26 nos.) for guarding round the clock for the premises of Biswa Bangla Biswabidyalay Campus at Bolpur Shantiniketan in the district of Birbhum throughout the year for a period of one year. Bid submission Closing on 09.07.2024, 03:00 P.M. Further details can be seen in website: https://wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- Ex. Engr., Bir. Divn., P.W. (S.S) Dte.
ICA- T8959(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
e-TENDER NOTICE
e-Tender is invited by the Superintending Engineer, South 24-Pgs. W/S Circle, PHE Dte. vide Ref. No. 04/2024-2025/SE/SWC/WBPHED and ID: 2024_PHED_693496_1 to 3 for 3 Nos. work of Additional Laying of Distribution Pipe Lines, Rising Main & Inter Connection, Construction of Boundary Wall, Construction of Approach Road and Land Development at different PWSS under at Udaynarayanpur Block Under Howrah Division. Details will be available in the website http://wbtenders.gov.in The last date for submission of tender is 12/07/2024 upto 3.00 PM. Sd/- for Superintending Engineer, South 24-Pgs. W/S Circle, P.H.E Dte.
ICA- T8973(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
e-TENDER NOTICE
e-Tender is invited by the Executive Engineer, Alipore Division, PHE Dte. On behalf of Governor, West Bengal vide Ref.No. WBPHED/EE/NIeT-04/AD/2024-2025 and Tender ID : 2024_PHED_693032_1 to 10 for construction of boundary wall along with land development, plinth protection and construction of pump house at different W/S Schemes for implementation of JJM under Kakdwip Sub-Division of Alipore Division, PHE Dte. Details will be available in the website wbtenders.gov.in The last date for submission of tender is 05.07.2024 upto 03:00 P.M. Sd/- for Executive Engineer, Alipore Division, P.H.E. Dte.
ICA- T8970(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
TENDER NOTICE
E-tenders have been invited by the TIAs of different districts under the Directorate of Fisheries, West Bengal for the following works. Other details may also be seen at https://wbtenders.gov.in

Sl No	District/ Establishment	Tender Reference No. / NIT No.	Bid Submission Start and End Date	Name of the Work / Scheme
1.	North 24 Pgs	WBCOF/ADF(APO)/e-NIT_08[2nd Call]/23-24	18.06.2024 & 03.07.2024	Repairing of Meen Bhaban Barasat, North 24 Parganas
2.	Alipurduar	WBOOF/ADF(APO)/e-NIT_11[2nd Call]/23-24	18.06.2024 & 03.07.2024	Commissioning of new Block Fishery Lab cum Training Building at Kumargram Dev Block
		WBOOF/ADF(APO)/e-NIT_11[2nd Call]/23-24		Repair and renovation of Block Fishery Lab cum Training building at Falakata Dev Block
		WBOOF/ADF(APO)/e-NIT_12[2nd Call]/23-24		Construction of Foot Bridge Near Adibasi Primary School On Kulkuti River at Radhanagar Part No 38/85 under Wills Bankisha-3 GP within Kumargram Block
		WBOOF/ADF(APO)/e-NIT_13[2nd Call]/23-24		Construction of Cement concrete Road From House of Indrajit Ghosh To Chapatali Bridge Via Sudhir Ghosh Pond under Banchukamari GP within Alipurduar – 1 Block
		WBOOF/ADF(APO)/e-NIT_09[2nd Call]/23-24		Air breating fish culture with Deshi Magur under TSP during the FY-2022-24
		WBOOF/ADF(APO)/e-NIT_08[2nd Call]/23-24		Air breating fish culture with Singhi under TSP during the FY- 2023-24

Sd/-
Director of Fisheries, West Bengal
ICA- T8898(3)/2024

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ASSAM: 8.00; NAGALAND: 8.00; MEGHALAYA/ ARUNACHAL/ MIZORAM/ MANIPUR: 1.00; MUMBAI AND BEYOND: 5.00; TRIPURA: 6.00; DELHI AND BEYOND/ CHENNAI AND BEYOND/ BANGALORE/ PORT BLAIR: 7.00.

CHANGE OF NAME
I Rishav Gadia, S/o Rajesh Gadia, residing at 115, Sri Arabindo Road, P.S.Golabari, Howrah-711106, do hereby declare that Rajesh Gadia and Rajesh Kumar Gadia is the same and one identical person i.e. my father, vide affidavit In The Court of Ld. Judicial Magistrate 1st Class at Alipore dated: 14.06.2024
AG61AGG61 00042914

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As per instruction of my Client (1) Tapati Tarafdar, wife of Late Ajoy Kumar Tarafdar, (2) Shampa Bhowmick, (3) Chandrani Chakraborty, (4) Barnali Nag Chowdhury, I published this notice, lost original Deed (Sale Deed), being Book No. I, Deed No. 4297 for the year 1985 registered before A.D.S.R. Serampore, Hooghly, and for that reason lodge GDE being GDE No. 1293/24 (Phoolbagan Police Station), if any one get please contact 9831667577/ 9681111005.
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Data upload on portal cited as reason

Govt seeks bank details from colleges

SUBHANKAR CHOWDHURY

Calcutta: The education department has sought from the government and aided colleges the details of fixed/ term deposits and the source of funds for such deposits.

The department had on Friday asked the colleges to share the details through a Google form by Tuesday afternoon on "an urgent basis".

The heads of the institutions were told to fill up the Google form and submit the same by 2pm on Tuesday.

Asked what prompted the government to seek bank details from the colleges, an official in the education department said: "The bank details have been sought to store the data in our higher education portal".

Several heads of the colleges wondered why the government was interested in details of the deposits which, they said, "should remain restricted between the college and those who have helped raise the corpus".

The joint director of public instructions has asked the colleges to share details as part of the "Deposit Fund Survey 2024".

In the Google form against the designated columns, the heads of the colleges have to state the number of Fixed/ Term Deposit, amount of deposit (in lakh), year of commencement (of deposit), name of the bank branch or IFSC along with source of funds for fixed/ term deposit.

However, the state government's decision to carry out the survey has left principals worried.

"The colleges through their resources create coffers which are called fixed deposits or term deposits," said Syamalendu Chatterjee, the president of the All Bengal Principals' Council.

"In some cases, donations lead to the development of the coffer. Earnings from what is collected as student fees are also added to the funds. This is spent to pay the casual workers or paint the college buildings. We fail to understand why these confidential facts have to be shared with the government," Chatterjee told **Metro**.

Colleges generate funds mostly through tuition and other fees.

While they can use half the funds, the other half goes to the state exchequer.

Purna Chandra Maity, the secretary of the council, said they could not understand in the absence of a government order how could the joint DPI seek confidential details.

"Colleges are governed by the governing bodies, which are the highest decision-making bodies. Without any discussions at the highest forums, we cannot share such confidential details. Besides, where is the government order? We just cannot feed details on the Google form," said Maity.

The forum has called an emergency meeting on Monday evening to decide on their stance on the issue.

Siuli Sarkar, the principal of the Lady Brabourne College, said: "Although as a government college, we are bound to share whatever details sought by the department, the department's fund survey has raised questions among the teachers. They are wondering whether details on Fixed deposits which are created following an endowment from a benevolent, could be shared".

Calls and text messages to the education minister Bratya Basu failed to elicit any response.

Tram breaks signal post near Lake Mall

SUBHAJOY ROY

Calcutta: A traffic signal post in front of the Lake Mall on Rashbehari Avenue broke and was hanging over the road on Monday morning for about an hour after the current collector rod of a tram hit the post.

The bogies of the tram had gone past the signal post when the current collector was dislodged from the overhead electric cables supplying power to the tram, said an officer of Kolkata Police's traffic department.

A current collector is a device at the back of a tram that goes up from the rear bogey and stays attached to the overhead cables. It draws electricity from the overhead cables.

The driver failed to notice that the current collector had loosened from the overhead wires and was dangling.

"The current collector was dangling but the tram was moving ahead because of inertia. It hit the signal post, which then broke because of the impact. The signal post had also rusted, which is why it broke," said the police officer.

The incident happened around 10.30am and the broken signal post was removed from there around an hour later, said the officer.

The police had first thought about temporarily restricting traffic along the stretch of Rashbehari Avenue near the mall.

However, Monday being a holiday the number of vehicles on the road was fewer and traffic restriction on the stretch was not required.

The broken traffic signal post on Rashbehari Avenue on Monday morning. Telegraph picture

All vehicles were asked to take the left lane on the Rashbehari Avenue-SP Mukherjee Road crossing-bound flank since the broken post was hanging over the right lane of the flank.

The police did not lodge any complaint against the tram's driver, said the traffic police officer.

"The signal post will be replaced soon. This was the secondary signal post. The primary signal post is still there and working," said the officer.

Metro had earlier written about the crumbling condition of poles along Calcutta's roads.

A thick bunch of cables are tied around most of the poles and the weight of the wires has tilted the poles in many places.

A bunch of cables was also tied around the traffic signal post in Lake Market that broke on Monday.

The Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC), the custodian of the electric poles along the city's roads, recently decided not to allow any advertisements on the poles.

A KMC official said the civic body would not give any fresh permission to install advertisements on electric poles as these made the structures unsafe.

The traffic signal post that broke on Monday had a rectangular advertisement board attached to it.

A KMC official said the civic body is not the custodian of traffic signal posts and all advertisements stuck to traffic signal posts were installed with permission from the police only.

A traffic police officer said there was no instruction yet from Kolkata Police's top brass to remove advertisements from the signal posts.

Train disruption after collision

OUR BUREAU

Malda/Alipurduar: The railway connectivity between the Northeast and the rest of the country was partially disrupted following the collision of the Agartala-Sealdah Kanchenjunga Express and a goods train near the Rangapani station on Monday morning.

Several trains on either side of the accident spot in Darjeeling district were halted at different stations.

The Padatik Express bound for New Alipurduar from Sealdah was almost 3km from the accident spot.

The railway officials said that 24 trains were diverted via Aluabari, Siliguri Junction and New Jalpaiguri (NJP). Three trains were cancelled.

The crash site near Rangapani railway station on Monday. Picture by Passang Yolmo

A rescue train was arranged by the railways from NJP to Sealdah to take passengers safely. Another relief train reached the spot from Alipurduar Junction while the first one arrived at the accident site from NJP.

The North Bengal State Transport Corporation (NBSTC) also sent 10 buses to the spot to ferry the passengers of the Kanchenjunga Express to their destination.

"Additional buses will ply from Siliguri to Calcutta," said Partha Pratim Roy, the chairman of the NBSTC.

The railway traffic through the Up-track (through which the trains from Calcutta move towards NJP and the Northeast) was restored at 5.40pm.

Scores of passengers were waiting to board trains bound for NJP and Calcutta at different stations in north Bengal when the railway traffic was thrown off the tracks after the collision.

Disaster control units for New Town

SNEHAL SENGUPTA

New Town: The New Town authorities are setting up three disaster management units for the three action areas, an official of the New Town Kolkata Development Authority (NKDA) said.

The NKDA provides civic services in New Town.

A senior NKDA official said that the decision to have three teams dedicated to each action area was taken keeping in mind that the city often gets lashed by thunderstorms.

"We have decided to have three teams for New Town that can be pressed into service in case of any disaster, particularly storms at a very short notice," said the official.

In Calcutta, storms often leave a trail of destruction. At least 120 trees had been uprooted in and around the city when Cyclone Remal made landfall on May 27.

The NKDA official said that each of these units will be equipped with power-cutting tools such as electric chain saws, hydraulic earthmovers, payloaders, dump trucks and trained personnel who can be deployed in case of thunderstorms and cyclones.

The official said that these teams can also be pressed into service to aid first responders such as the fire and emergency services department in case the need arises.

Each of these teams will be stationed in NKDA offices of action areas I, II and III where adequate parking space can be arranged.

"These teams will form the core of the disaster management unit and if need be depending on the scale of the storm more manpower can be deployed," the official said.

New Town has one advantage over the rest of the city as the authorities here don't allow any advertising panels with steel frames and the street lights as well as other street furniture are largely free from any overhead cable.

"We do not allow advertising on the Main Arterial Road. Stringent rules are in place even in the lanes off the arterial road," said an NKDA official.

This is one of the reasons why lamp posts don't topple over as they don't have to bear the weight of cables wrapped around them.

West Bengal is set to become the 60th most climate risk-prone region in the world by 2050 among the more than 2,600 regions across the world that have been studied, says a global report (XDI's Gross Domestic Climate Risk) published recently.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person(s) **Mrs. Shubhra Manna W/o** Raj Kumar Manna **R/o:** H. No. 141/1, Deshbandhu Road, P.O. Alambajar PS Baraha Nagar Near Axis ATM, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 541734/2016, U/s 138 NI Act, P.S.: Rajinder Nagar, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person(s) **Mrs. Shubhra Manna,** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person(s) **Mrs. Shubhra Manna,** has absconded (or is concealing herself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person(s) **Mrs. Shubhra Manna,** of **FIR No. 541734/2016, U/s 138 NI Act, P.S.: Rajinder Nagar, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **01.08.2024.**

By Order
Ms. Divya Gupta

DP/7155/CD/2024 (Court Matter)
Metropolitan Magistrate-05 (Central Distt.), Room No. 02, Tis Hazari Court, New Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

General Public is hereby informed that the Letter of Approval N. FSEZ/LC/M-1/2016/140 dated 07/04/2016 of M/s MET Technologies Private Ltd, an IT/ITES Unit located at M/s Candor Kolkata One Hi-Tech Structures Private Limited IT/ITES SEZ, Candor TechSpace, Plot No.1, Block No. DH, Street No. 316, Newtown, Rajarhat, Kolkata (W.B.)-700156 has been cancelled in terms of Section 16 of the SEZ Act 2005 w.e.f. 26.12.2023. In this regard, the Order-in-Original issued by the Zonal Development Commissioner (Eastern & North Zone), Falta Special Economic Zone to the Directors of unit has been returned undelivered.

If any Person/Bank/Creditors have any manner of claim in respect of the goods kept in the said unit's premises at Candor Kolkata One Hi-Tech Structures Private Limited IT/ITES SEZ, they are hereby called upon to submit their objections in writing, alongwith certified copies of documents on which they rely to the office of the Zonal Development Commissioner, Falta Special Economic Zone, Nizam Palace, 2nd MSO Building, 4th Floor, 234/4 AJC Bose Road, Kolkata-700020, within 14 days from the date of publication of this notice. Objections received thereafter will not be entertained. If the above goods are not claimed by any entity then further proceeding of taking over possession of such goods and disposal of the same through public auction will be initiated forthwith by the office of Zonal Development Commissioner, as per Rule 77(4) of SEZ Rules 2006.

Dated this 18 day of June, 2024 at Kolkata

For **Candor Kolkata One Hi-Tech Structures Private Limited**
Sd/-
Subrata Ghosh
Director
DIN: 08360730
Candor TechSpace, Plot No.1,
Block No. DH, Street No. 316,
Newtown, Rajarhat, Kolkata (W.B.)-700156

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দেশ
১৭ জুন ২০২৪

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ইস্কুল না পালিয়ে: এক আবাসিকের বয়ান গ্রন্থের আলোচনায় প্রণব সরকার

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The Telegraph

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OLD ORDER

When leaders of the Group of Seven major industrialised nations met at a southern Italian resort last week, they had Russia's war on Ukraine and intensifying competition with China at the top of their agenda. Also on their menu, though, was a more thorny issue: the group's very legitimacy in the eyes of much of the world, especially the Global South. The G7, which consists of the United States of America, Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Canada, once used to control 70% of the planet's gross domestic product, a figure that is now down to 40% with Asia emerging as the world's economic engine. Viewed in many parts of the world as elitist and exclusivist, compared to the G20 group of major economies, the G7 has tried to reinvent itself in recent years, inviting leaders from other partner nations. It was in this context that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the presidents of Brazil, Turkey, and a record number of other Global South nations were invited by Italy, the G7 host, to join some of the summit's meetings. Yet, the summit and its outcome raise more questions than the ones they answer about the G7's ability to be truly representative of the world and its economies.

Days before a Ukraine peace summit hosted by Switzerland, the G7 conclave pulled Kyiv and Moscow farther apart from any chance of sitting at the negotiation table by deciding to use frozen Russian assets in the West to finance a $50 billion loan to Ukraine. As India and several other Global South nations stated at the Swiss peace summit, any end to the war in Ukraine would need Kyiv and Moscow to be in the same room. Through its actions, the G7 did not help that cause. The G7 communiqué, in its refusal to condemn Israel for its deadly war on Gaza, while rightly criticising Russia for its war on Ukraine, revealed, once again, the double standards that underpin the US-led grouping's approach to the world. That is an approach that the Global South can never accept. At this moment, the G7 also suffers from a crisis of credibility given the unfavourable ratings that the leaders of the US, the UK, France, Germany, Canada and Japan face in polls in their own countries. For India and the Global South, the G7 summit was a reminder that institutions that represent the old elite ultimately cannot reflect an emerging world order in which the West's stranglehold on power has weakened, even if its illusions have not.

SAVE THEM

When tragedy struck Indian migrant workers in Kuwait — 45 of them perished in a devastating fire — the external affairs minister pledged the fullest of assistance from the Indian embassy. The latter did open helpline numbers to assist the families of the deceased: the prime minister was quick to announce *ex-gratia* relief for the unfortunate families too. Yet, the proverbial flames refuse to die down: the reason being that both the Centre and the Kerala government had left gaps that needed to be filled to avert the tragedy. It has been reported that Indian embassies in a number of West Asian countries had received complaints from India's migrant workers regarding such grievances as poor working conditions, substandard accommodation and non-payment of salaries: almost half of these complaints — they number over 16,000 — had come from Kuwait. It appears that not much was done to address the complaints. This is significant given that one of the concerns — improper accommodation — played a role in the tragedy: the gutted building housed over 190 workers. Pinarayi Vijayan's government, which has been pointing fingers at New Delhi after the latter denied permission to the Kerala health minister to fly to Kuwait, was guilty of lapses too. Maintaining an updated database of migrant workers, an essential element to track the well-being of members of the diaspora, seems not to have been accorded the urgency it deserves. This despite the fact that Kerala accounts for a lion's share of the total number of migrant labourers from India. Incidentally, the completion of the database has been a longstanding demand among the workers who go to the Gulf.

Two things need to be done post-haste in light of the tragedy. The state and the Centre must coordinate to create a comprehensive repository of the details of Indian workers on foreign shores. They must also take steps to rein in illegal employment agencies that often exploit overseas workers. This will require the state and the Centre to resurrect the established, but frayed, protocols of federalism. Second, the Centre must take up the grievances that have already been registered by Indian workers in the Gulf nations through requisite diplomatic channels. New Delhi's equations with most of these nation states are smooth; hence the redressal of the problems faced by Indian workers should not face insurmountable odds if New Delhi puts its mind to it.

SCRIPSI

'Insane people are always sure that they are fine. It is only the sane people who are willing to admit that they are crazy.'

NORA EPHRON

The rumblings in Europe would impact India

Not that distant

THE THIN EDGE

RUCHIR JOSHI

The voting booth is just across the road and I have a good view of the people entering and leaving. Naturally, things are tense with this election: it's a battle between those who see humanity as a large, connected family and those hell-bent on dividing people and excluding millions on the basis of religion and ethnicity. It's a battle between politicians who want to protect their oligarch funders from taxes and crucial environmental restrictions and others who want to see a more equitable distribution of wealth. It's a fight between those who are deliberately ignoring the exponential degradation of our living environment and those who are terrified by how quickly we are hurtling towards an ecological Armageddon.

Who will win? The ones who want to capture or maintain power on the basis of an imagined cultural hegemony while denying all those they label as 'outsiders' or 'termites'? Or the ones who see all humans as equals involved in an unceasing dynamic of give and take? Those who are hell-bent on imposing their fake claims as shiny replicas of truth or those who believe in the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press? The ones whose only mode of politics is to create and shore up personality cults to serve themselves or the ones who work as democratic teams to serve their societies?

The only thing identifying the ballot station is a small board outside the building with a notice in marker pen giving the timings of the voting. There is no queue at this particular booth. The crisp June air is well short of a fully unfurled summer and all through the day people trickle in, in ones and twos, some pushing baby-buggies, some carrying their shopping, stopping at the station to cast their ballot on the way home. Across four consecutive days, adults from 27 countries with a total population of 447 million people cast paper ballots for their continental Parliament. The election is quiet. Voting numbers are down across the huge territory and the whole election seems a bit 'depressed'. Today is the last day of voting — June 9 — and the booths shut at 6 pm.

By late evening, the results are out, the writing is on the wall, and it does not make for happy reading for anyone who stands against fascism and racism, nor for anyone who cares about the fate of the planet. Whether it's a rap on the knuckle side-vote against incumbent parties, an early jackboot stride desirous of stamping out of liberal and democratic values or an emphatic shoring up of the right-wing parties already in power, millions of Europeans, especially in three of the largest EU countries, have voted for the most poisonous, cynical, and cruel candidates available on the ballot papers for the European Parliament.

"It's crazy," says a German professor friend who teaches modern history, "most of the old GDR areas plus parts of the south have all gone Nazi." "Nazi?" I

ask sceptically. "Well yes, be in no doubt, the AfD makes masking noises but if you scratch the surface they are Hitlerites 2.0." A French friend sends a colour-coded map of how all the French MEP constituencies voted adding "... *nous sommes vraiment dans la merde*!" (we are really in the s**t.) The Rassemblement National (RN, also called National Rally in English) had been allotted the colour, brown, and the map shows almost all of the country covered with that colour and, yes, visually it does resemble a map of France painted with excrement — for the first time since they were formed in 1972, the French white supremacists truly look like they are in the ascendancy. In Italy, there is a resounding vote for Giorgia Meloni in her double avatar as the prime minister leading the extreme right-wing Brothers of Italy party and one of the main leaders of the European Conservatives and Reformists Group, which is the conglomeration of most of Europe's big, proto-facsist parties. In Hungary, the quasi-dictator, Viktor Orbán, is happy; in Poland, the recently ejected conservatives have made a comeback in the MEP vote; in Holland, the Dutch right-wing has made gains.

Sitting in this Europe and reading about the aftermath of the elections in India (I left the day before the results were declared), the elation at so many parts of the country fighting their way out of our own chemical orange mire is short-lived. Even though there are solid reasons to celebrate the survival of a democracy that skydived without a parachute, there comes the counter-balancing reality of these results in the EU. Almost without let-up, we now await the outcomes of three more foreign elections that will affect India in varying degrees: around July 7, the result of Emmanuel Macron's Russian roulette move of declaring snap elections in France; on July 4, hopefully, the ejection of the Tories after 14 long years of heartless and clownish incompetence (to be replaced by a Labour government over which there are already many questions); and, then, come November 5, the scariest of them all — the United States of America choosing between a deeply flawed and visibly evaporating Joe Biden and the walking, orange, radioactive meltdown known as Donald Trump.

How do all these political battles far across the world affect us? Well, who runs the US, the UK and Europe and how they deal with us matter to any Indian government, no matter how much the RSS-BJP regime may pretend otherwise; much as our leaders may preen and prance or deploy braggadocio and bluster, India is not China, Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia or Israel. We are far from achieving any effective unilaterality; we need the Western powers more than they need us, much as we may nurture other delusions. Their official opprobrium, their governmental displeasure, and the judgement of their media can and do hurt us in serious ways; it impacts our economy, our defence capabilities, and our general position and honour in the world. Be in no doubt that the naked contempt the regime has displayed towards democratic norms would have been far worse but for the constant softly spoken but serious words from Western counterparts and diplomats urging restraint. Therefore, when there's a Trump in the White House, a Priti Patel in the UK home office, a Nero Netanyahu in Tel Aviv or a Meloni ruling Rome, that constant urging and the attendant costs of ignoring it are that much reduced.

Despite the projections that a coalition would give it some pause, we are seeing the regime's default autocratic mode kicking back in: the ink hasn't yet dried on the signatures of those who took oath in the new government and we are already witnessing the renewed weaponisation of the most draconian laws in the re-activation of absurd, long dormant cases against prominent political dissenters. From July 1 come the new penal code laws that were rammed through with a large chunk of the Opposition locked out of the Lok Sabha, laws that belong only in a kangaroo *raj*. Let's be under no illusion that these manoeuvres and the conduct of the somewhat free elections that preceded them would have been far worse but for the privately conveyed and publicly broadcast criticisms from major Western governments.

What these EU results mean for the RSS-BJP regime can be seen in one visual nugget in a selfie video posted by Meloni from the recent G7 Summit in Italy. In it, you can see Signora Meloni waving and proclaiming "Hello from the Melodi team!" as Mr Modi chortles just behind her. Video memes of their meeting are already up on social media and variations on the unfortunate 'Melodi' coinage will no doubt surface shortly to join in the tune. Much as we may laugh at 'Nargia', 'Giorendra', 'Melanomodia' or 'Melanomendra' or the quip, 'at least the RSS-BJP won't be able to harp on about Congress *ka* Italian Connection anymore', the rise of a cynical, extreme, right-wing phalanx in Europe is no laughing matter for us in our still beleaguered Republic.

Kundera, Calvino and AI

MANJIMA MISRA

Milan Kundera and Italo Calvino, the Czech-French and Italian writers, respectively, share more convergences in their thought processes than has been discussed. These convergences are relevant to such contemporary developments as Artificial Intelligence, mass media and content creation. As early as 1986, Kundera pointed out, "Once elevated by Descartes to 'master and proprietor of nature', man has now become a mere thing to the forces [of technology, of politics, of history] that bypass him, surpass him, possess him..."

This argument can be illustrated through social media algorithms or Search Engine Optimisation dynamics. As content creators, humans often employ algorithms and SEO instead of exercising agency or choice: they are, as Kundera argued, possessed by, instead of possessing, the forces of technology.

Interestingly, in 1988, Calvino had emphasised the irreplaceability of the human mind too. In *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, he wrote, "The motor age has turned speed into a measurable value, with speed records marking the history of the progress of machines and men. But speed of mind cannot be measured and does not allow for comparisons or competitions, nor can its results be ranked to give historical perspective. Speed of mind is valuable in itself, for the pleasure it gives those susceptible to such pleasure, not for any practical use it can be put to."

Kundera's and Calvino's outlook on mass media and literary creation also shares multiple parallels. On literary creation, both are advocates of innovation, ingenuity and experimentation, characteristics that are discernible in their novels. Both writers concur that the novel is essentially a pursuit of knowledge — knowledge that has not yet been discovered — and that the novel also has an existential function. Both question the homogeneity of content that is produced by the demands of mass media and the publishing marketplace that, they argue, are contradictory to the spirit of literary creation. Kundera says that "the sole raison d'etre of a novel is to discover what only the novel can discover. A novel that does not discover a hitherto unknown segment of existence is immoral. Knowledge is the novel's only morality." Further, he emphasises that "the novel is incompatible with the totalitarian universe...The world of one single Truth and the relative, ambiguous world of the novel are molded of entirely different substances. Totalitarian truth excludes relativity, doubt, questioning; it can never accommodate what I would call the 'spirit of the novel'."

In *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, Calvino writes, "In each of these talks I'm choosing a particular quality dear to my heart to recommend to the next millennium, and today the quality I want to recommend is this: In an age dominated by other media that are much faster and more pervasive and that risk flattening all communication into a single, homogenous crust, the function of literature is to communicate among different things in terms of their differences, exalting rather than diminishing their differences, which is the proper role of written language."

In a world that is moving towards a greater degree of homogeneity and systematisation in terms of mass media production and content creation, it is instructive to revisit the views of Kundera and Calvino as they foresaw an era in the history of human civilisation where humans might become a passive recipient of technological forces instead of retaining the proactive, creative agency that can master technological forces. Kundera and Calvino's outlook also reminds us of the need to create technology that works for the upliftment of humankind instead of the other way round.

Manjima Misra is a writer based in Delhi

Unreal expectation

■ Sir — Asking whether an autocrat can become a democrat is like asking whether a leopard can change its spots ("The boss chastened", June 15). The Indian media and the Bharatiya Janata Party built an aura of invincibility around the prime minister and he ended up believing that he is a messiah. But people realised that a messiah has no place in a democracy and showed Narendra Modi his place.

Anthony Henriques,
Mumbai

■ Sir — In the last century, we had seen autocrats like Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. Leaders like Narendra Modi and Vladimir Putin are part of the same club and are unlikely to ever turn into democrats. The democratic ethos of India has taken a hit since the BJP and Modi came to power with a thumping majority in 2014. Now opportunists like Nitish Kumar and N. Chandrababu Naidu have given autocracy another five years in India.

Asim Boral,
Calcutta

Fallen behind

■ Sir — It is not right to say that the Left is not interested in the unorganised sector comprising delivery personnel, security guards, shop-floor assistants and other gig workers ("Left red-faced", June 14). The Left has a strong affinity towards workers from the informal sector. As part of a Left party myself, I can vouch for the fact that gig workers have been contacted and conventions held with them. Workers from the unorganised sector are apprehensive of joining the Left brigade for fear of losing their jobs.

Niamul Hossain Mallick,
East Burdwan

■ Sir — Anup Sinha has rightly observed that unless the Left parties rethink their methods, they will lose credibility in West Bengal. In fact, the Left has lost support in many places owing to its isolation. It is the duty of youngsters within the Left to ask the leadership to understand the potential of newer social identities in electoral politics.

Jayanta Datta,
Hooghly

Keep it cool

■ Sir — The weather is too hot to handle and people are finding unique ways to beat the heat. In Telangana, for instance, a man was found floating motionless in a pond for hours. So much so that the police assumed that he was dead. As it turned out, he was a drunk quarry worker enjoying a well-deserved break after 10 days of back-breaking labour in the scorching heat. Across India, there are many others like this man who cannot afford air conditioners or coolers and seek relief from the heat with a quick dip in the local pond. Yet, climate change policies that are often drafted in well-ventilated, air-conditioned rooms do not take into consideration the significance of local ecosystems and how they can help the poor combat the adverse impacts of heat waves.

Piyush Gaikwad,
Mumbai

■ Sir — The article, "Left red-faced", critically analyses the reasons for the Left's debacle in West Bengal in the 2024 general elections in spite of fielding fresh faces who drew large crowds. The Left has not kept itself up to date with present-day realities such as the effect of technology on labour and the widening rift with nature. An upgradation is thus the need of the hour for the Left. Blaming the Trinamool Congress for the Left's decline will not help.

Jahar Saha,
Calcutta

■ Sir — In spite of allegations of corruption, the TMC has implemented many welfare programmes in West Bengal. Anup Sinha's argument that nothing happens in the state without the use of "side-payments" is an overstatement. Welfare schemes and freebies are now used by most political parties, leading to the Left losing its exclusivity in this aspect. The support that farmers received from the Opposition parties in 2020 which forced the Centre to withdraw the three harmful farm laws caused further damage to the Left's chance to make an impact.

Behind the times

Sukhendu Bhattacharjee,
Hooghly

Sucker punch

■ Sir — After the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief, Mohan Bhagwat, another *sangh* functionary, Indresh Kumar, has now taken potshots at the Bharatiya Janata Party ("Sangh churn persists", June 15). The RSS is leaving no stone unturned to vent its anger and dent the BJP's arrogance. The RSS and its cadre deserve much of the credit for the BJP's current success. Remarks by the BJP president, J.P. Nadda, regarding his party no longer needing the RSS seems to have angered the latter. The prime minister should pay attention to these warnings.

Bal Govind,
Noida

■ Sir — The RSS leader, Indresh Kumar, has blamed the arrogance of the Narendra Modi-led BJP for the party's lowered seat share in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The statement came after the RSS chief, Mohan Bhagwat, rapped the prime minister on the knuckles for his arrogance. A personality cult now reigns supreme in the BJP. The RSS's continued attacks are a criticism of this attitude.

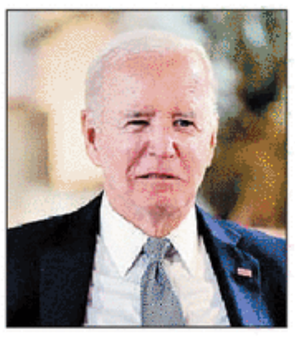
S.S. Paul,
Nadia

■ Sir — Indresh Kumar has slammed the ruling BJP for its "arrogance". Speaking at the Ramrath Ayodhya Yatra Darshan Poojan Samaroh, Kumar suggested that the outcome of the 2024 polls was a fallout of the BJP's attitude. These remarks came days after the RSS chief, Mohan Bhagwat, said that a true "*sevak*" does not have arrogance and serves people while maintaining "dignity". The BJP should pay heed to these hard-hitting remarks.

Bhagwan Thadani,
Mumbai

Too old

■ Sir — The United States of America deserves a president younger than Joe Biden. One cannot believe that the Democratic Party does not have a more competent candidate than Biden. Donald Trump might win because of Biden's *faux pas*.



Old enough to retire?

S. Kamat,
Mysuru

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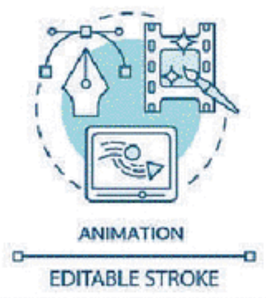

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The Telegraph
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CALCUTTA TUESDAY 18 JUNE 2024

CAREER CHOICE

Soumitra Das on the past, present and future of animation

The Big Picture

MASTER'S STROKE: A story board by Ganesh Pyne for Mandar Mullick's studio.
Photo, courtesy Akar Prakar

Commercially, animation started — mainly in advertising and visual effects and titles in feature films — in Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Trivandrum and Calcutta, as these are film-producing cities. In the early years, the pioneers were Dadasaheb Phalke, Gunomoy Banerjee, Gokhale and Mandar Mullick, who employed Ganesh Pyne. Later, emerged Bhimsain Khurana, Ram Mohan (1931-2019), V.G. Samant, R.L. Mistry to name a few. Ram Mohan was eventually crowned the Father of Indian Animation. Later came progressive pioneers like Prakash Moorthy, Dhimant Vyas, Srinivas Bhakta, Phani Tetali, Sanjiv Waeerkar, Vaibhav Kumaresh, E. Suresh, Sanath PC, Chetan Sharma and Gayatri Rao, Nina Sabnani, Shilpa Ranade and Gitanjali Rao.

Before formal education in animation took off at the National Institute of Design (NID) in Ahmedabad in the 1960s and the IIT Bombay Industrial Design Centre (IDC) in Mumbai in the mid-80s, many people started as self-taught animators in the studios of film-producing cities. One good example was the Calcutta-based Chandi Lahiri.

Post-Independence, the Indian government set up the Films Division of India (FDI) in 1948 to promote and document our diverse culture. To increase awareness and tell our own stories, the Cartoon Film Unit was set up as a part of the FDI in 1955. Later, animation in advertisements became popular.

The FDI played a significant role in training and developing Indian talent during the early days. NID, Ahmedabad, began offering animation training in the 1960s, producing the likes of Ishu Patel. When we consider animation as a medium of storytelling, we can draw parallels to the use of puppets in traditional storytelling. One of the most popular forms closely related to animation in India is shadow puppets.

Animation has emerged as a popular career option. It is an industry which is in need of a large workforce of diverse talent, not just storytellers.

The medium of animation has made its way into almost every sector — be it ultra-short or feature-length films, episodic series, advertisements, video games, architectural walk-throughs, medical or defence simulation, live action storyboard, fiction, non-fiction, explainer video, game, interactive, infographics, multimedia performance, merchandising or educational aids.

Here are some tips for aspiring animators based on information provided by Sekhar Mukherjee, programme lead, department of moving image, Anant National University, Ahmedabad; Sanath PC, co-founder, VFX supervisor and creative director at Firefly creative studio in Hyderabad; and Vaibhav Kumaresh, Emmy-nominated animation filmmaker, and founder and creative director at Vaibhav Studios in Mumbai.

Training

Two different kinds of programmes are emerging in animation education. The school of storytelling in the likes of NID, IDC, Shristi Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Maharashtra Institute of Technology and the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute. And the school of techniques with the likes of Arena and MAAC.

Qualifications

For most institutions, Plus Two is the basic qualification, and an aptitude test is also to be passed. Essentials are storytelling ability, passion, sincerity, imagination, originality, honesty, curiosity, willingness to experiment and work hard, and a portfolio of non-copied creativity. A background in fine arts and performing arts is always advantageous. It also depends on what kind of school one is approaching. Some learn as an apprentice in a studio if they prove their worth.

Quality

It was tagged as backend — outsourced work — and copycat nation — little independent work beyond the Disney or Pixar template — when it came to animation. However, owing to good schools like NID and IDC and the few good animation festivals and bodies like Chitrakatha, TASI's Anifest India, MIFF and now Animela, there is a slow rise in Indian animation cinema. Apart from the US, the example India is now following is the indie animation culture of the world, like Franco Belgian, Japanese, and Swiss. There is a glimmer of hope. Indigenous animation content creators in India who create films from idea to execution are in a minority. They need to work hard at their storytelling as well as production quality to build a local industry.

Future

It was always an uncertain journey till the IT revolution started an avenue for outsourced studios where animation training became popular. In the aftermath of 9/11, business process outsourcing (BPO), which was on a high, crashlanded.

The pandemic and the advancement of digital platforms were a big boost for animation storytellers to find a foothold alongside spreading awareness of the tremendous potential of animation as a beautiful vehicle.

Companies catering to outsourced projects will continue to depend on their foreign counterparts for business. Content creators need to build a strong local audience by producing local animation content that connects with our audiences. That's the only way to encourage content creation and consumption — and thereby create a self-sufficient industry.

Animation remains an enduring form of communication, continually adapting and evolving alongside technological advancements. As boundaries between mediums blur, animation will embrace new forms and definitions. With the arrival of AI, it's a crossroads situation. But it could be exciting.

Q&A FOR YOU

NINA MUKHERJI

A plethora of choices for law graduates

Q What are the different areas of law that I can specialise in?

The legal field, with its various specialisations and career paths, emphasises foundational subjects such as contract, constitutional, criminal and civil law during the bachelor's degree. This paves the way for specialisation through a master's degree or practical experience in a law firm. Civil law, a broad category covering areas like contract law, property law, family law, and tort, involves assisting individuals or businesses in resolving disputes, such as divorce proceedings and business contracts. In contrast, criminal law focuses on prosecuting or defending individuals accused of crimes, encompassing areas like white-collar crime, drug offences and violent crimes.Emerging fields like technology law and cyber law focus on legal issues related to the Internet, digital technology and data privacy. Technology law involves intellectual property rights, online contracts and e-commerce regulations, while cyber law deals with cybersecurity, data breaches and online privacy. Additionally, there are niche areas like environmental law, immigration law and international law.

ISTOCK.COM/ALEXEY YAREMENKO

Blast from the past

Q Are there internships available in history-related fields?

Many internship opportunities are available for students interested in history-related fields in museums, archives, libraries and cultural institutions. The National Museum in Delhi offers internships wherein participants catalogue ancient manuscripts, assist with exhibitions and gain hands-on experience in historical research and presentation. Organisations like the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (Intach) provide internships tailored to those passionate about heritage conservation. These internships often involve tasks such as archival research, documentation of heritage sites and community engagement initiatives aimed at preserving India's diverse cultural legacy. Internships in history-related areas provide practical skills and insights into the world of history. They enrich understanding of the past and prepare students for a fulfilling career in historical research, preservation and education.

Sustainable goals

Q What career paths can I pursue in the sustainability sector?

As people become more aware of environmental issues and the need for sustainable practices, sustainability has become a popular career choice. The field offers a variety of career paths across sectors and disciplines. One option is environmental science, which focuses on issues such as pollution control, conservation and natural resource management. The roles available in this area are environmental scientist, conservation biologist or sustainability consultant, where you assess the impact of human activities on the environment and develop strategies to mitigate those impacts. Another avenue is sustainable business and management, which integrates environmental and social responsibility into corporate practices. In this field, you could work as a sustainability manager, overseeing a company's environmental initiatives, or as a green building consultant, advising on sustainable construction practices. Careers in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, urban planning and green technology also offer avenues to contribute to a more sustainable future.

Nina Mukherji is a career counsellor and certified psychometric assessor. She conducts workshops in various areas for students. Mail your queries to *telegraphyou@gmail.com* with "Ask Nina" in the subject line. Don't forget to add the name of your school or college and a contact number

ADVT

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PURBA MEDINIPUR RESIDENT

Mr. SUVENDU DAS from PURBA MEDINIPUR, WEST BENGAL has won Rs. 1 Crore as first prize in Dear Weekly Lottery in the draw held on **09.04.2024**. His winning ticket number is **88C 77127**. He has submitted his prize-winning ticket along with the prize claim form to the Nodal Officer, Nagaland State Lotteries located at Kolkata. "I would like to thank Dear Lottery and Nagaland State Lotteries for providing such a wonderful platform to try our fortune. I feel very proud of winning One Crore rupees of prize money from Dear Lottery. This huge prize money will improve the financial status of our family", said the winner.

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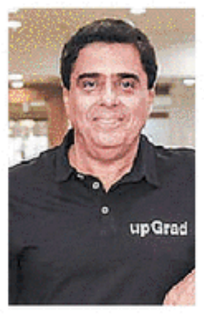
The Telegraph
BUSINESS

CALCUTTA TUESDAY 18 JUNE 2024 XXCE

"The edu-tech sector will grow regardless of whether VCs come or not. Solid companies are being built, right now.

Ronnie Screwvala, Upgrad founder



IN BRIEF

Paytm board exit

■ **NEW DELHI:** Former chief business officer of WhatsApp Neeraj Arora has quit the board of the fintech firm One97 Communications, owner of Paytm brand, citing pre-occupation and personal commitments, a regulatory filing said on Monday. Arora had quit the Paytm board earlier in early 2018 but rejoined it before the company's IPO. Former Sebi director Rajeev Krishnamuralilal Agarwal has joined the Paytm board. PTI

Banks EDs

■ **NEW DELHI:** The Financial Services Institutions Bureau, the head-hunter for directors of state-owned banks and financial institutions, on Monday recommended the elevation of 5 chief general managers for the post of executive directors in various banks. The FSIB interviewed 57 candidates between June 13-17. PTI

Le Travenues

■ **MUMBAI:** Shares of Le Travenues Technology, which operates the travel booking platform ixigo, will make its stock market debut on Tuesday after garnering massive subscriptions for its initial public offering last week. PTI

Insolvency hearing

■ **NEW DELHI:** The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has directed the NCLT to hear afresh the insolvency plea filed by APL Apollo Tubes against one of its purchasers of goods. PTI

Mahindra housing

■ **MUMBAI:** Realty firm Mahindra Lifespace Developers Ltd is targeting a sharp increase in its annual sales of housing properties and industrial space to ₹8,000-10,000 crore by 2027-28 fiscal on rising demand. PTI

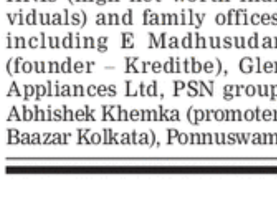
China rate

■ **BEIJING:** China's central bank kept a key lending rate unchanged on Monday, choosing not to loosen credit as data for May showed signs of persisting weakness in the world's No. 2 economy's manufacturing and real estate sectors. AP/PTI

Defence FDI

■ **NEW DELHI:** Factors such as streamlining foreign direct investment as well as augmenting Research and Development (R&D) and manufacturing capabilities can help the country realise its $5 billion defence export target by 2024-25, says a study by Nexgen Exhibitions. PTI

BOTTOM LINERS



Bid to bring natural gas under GST

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Mumbai: Natural gas players will be glued to the upcoming meeting of GST Council that could see the new government take a shot at bringing the feedstock under GST.

Natural gas under GST will be ``landmark event'' leading to lower prices and benefiting companies such as Gujarat Gas, Petronet LNG and GAIL (India) Ltd, analysts said.

Natural gas at present comes under legacy taxes such as state VAT, central excise duty and central sales tax. The tax varies from state to state in the range of 14-24 per cent. The meeting of GST Council is scheduled on June 22.

Besides natural gas, the markets are buzzing with the possibility of the council looking at bringing aviation turbine fuel (ATF) under GST.

It could also review the levies on online gaming, horse racing and casinos.

``If natural gas is actually included under the ambit of GST, we reckon it would be a landmark event for the sector; it will create a level playing field for natural gas and help establish active gas markets (trading hubs, gas swaps),'' analysts at IIFL Securities said in a note.

The brokerage pointed out that while consumers will be one of the biggest beneficiaries, in the long-run, players across the value chain will gain. It expects city gas distribution (CGD) companies to pass on the benefit of ITC (input tax credit) that will make CNG and piped natural gas competitive.

``We think, biggest benefits would accrue to industrial consumers, which as of now are consuming natural gas, but not able to claim ITC.

"These include ceramic players, in clusters such as Morbi, and other industries such as refineries, fertilisers etc which as of now do not get ITC,'' IIFL Securities said.

It added that including natural gas under GST could facilitate the creation of a trading hub in India, which is currently hindered by tax variations across states.

Gas trading companies would be able to transact amongst each other, either intra or inter-state.

In the long run, such a trading hub could also create a local benchmark price as seen in other regions across the globe such as Henry Hub (USA).

Global brokerage Jefferies said if natural gas is brought under GST, gas companies will pass on the savings to consumers. It added that Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan are the biggest beneficiaries of VAT on the feedstock. With these states governed by the NDA it feels there could be breakthrough in discussions.

Jefferies said GAIL (India) Ltd would be among those companies which will benefit as increased natural gas competitiveness would drive higher adoption rates and medium-term growth in transmission & distribution volumes.

It added that the inclusion could lower natural gas cost by $0.8-0.9 per mmBtu and aid faster adoption.

THE GAINS

- At present natural gas is taxed at 14-24 per cent by various states
- Prices will fall across the value chain as all will claim input tax credit
- Move will facilitate creation of trading hubs
- GST Council meeting on June 22

Cut in personal tax rates likely

New Delhi: The Indian government is considering lowering personal tax rates for certain categories of individuals, which could help boost consumption in Asia's third-largest economy, two government sources told Reuters.

The plan could be announced in July, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government presents the first federal budget after his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) failed to win a majority on its own.

A post-poll survey showed that voters were worried about inflation, unemployment and decreasing incomes.

While the Indian economy grew at a world-beating 8.2 per cent in 2023-24, consumption has grown at half that pace.

Prime Minister Modi, while staking a claim to form the National Democratic Alliance-ruled government, had said his administration would focus on raising middle-class savings and improving the quality of their lives.

A cut in personal tax could boost consumption in the economy and increase savings for the middle class, the sources said, declining to be identified as budget discussions are confidential.

India's finance ministry did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

The category of individuals that may see some tax relief are those earning over ₹15 lakh ($17,960.42) annually, up to a certain amount which is yet to be determined, the first source said.

The changes could be made to a tax scheme introduced in 2020, where annual income up to ₹15 lakh is taxed at 5-20 per cent, while earnings over ₹15 lakh are taxed at 30 per cent.

Nirmala Sitharaman

The personal tax rate jumps six-fold when an individual's income increases five times from ₹3 lakh to ₹15 lakh, "which is quite steep", the second source said.

The government may also explore lowering personal tax rates for annual incomes of ₹10 lakh, said the first source, adding that a new threshold was being discussed for income taxed at the highest rate of 30 per cent under the old tax system.

Any loss of tax income to the government through tax cuts could be partially offset by increased consumption from this category of income earners, the second source said.

The federal government is targeting a fiscal deficit of 5.1 per cent of GDP in the financial year ending March 2025.

Strong tax collections amid a buoyant economy and a bumper dividend from the central bank will give the government flexibility in planning the first budget of its new term, Reuters reported earlier

Meanwhile, corporate houses are bracing for revenue uncertainties in the April-June period due to a slowdown in government spending and the onset of the annual monsoon season, domestic rating agency Icra said on Monday.

The sequential revenue growth will taper in the first quarter of the fiscal, the agency said in a note, adding that there was a 6.5 per cent growth in revenues in the March quarter compared with the preceding December quarter.

Reuters; Inputs from Delhi Bureau

Fall in diesel demand ignites slowdown fears

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi: The demand for diesel, the lifeblood of India's economy, plunged 3.9 per cent in the first fortnight of June compared with a year ago that appears to be a monthly trend — raising fears of a slowdown.

Demand not only fell in June but also in the first fortnight of May (down 1.1 per cent), April (2.3 per cent) and March (2.7 per cent), according to data of state-owned retailers.

Diesel is India's most consumed fuel, accounting for almost 40 per cent of all petroleum product consumption. The transport sector accounts for 70 per cent of all diesel sales in the country. It is also the predominant fuel used in agriculture sectors, including in harvesters and tractors.

The decline in demand is a sign of a possible decline in economic activity in these sectors.

Diesel sales are a major source of tax revenue for the government. The sustained slump could lead to lower tax collections, potentially impacting public spending plans.

Besides electioneering, the summer harvest season as also the scorching summer that increases the demand for air conditioning in cars, should have led to a rise in fuel consumption. However, this year has defied the trend..

A comprehensive analysis and revised fuel pricing strategies are crucial to address this issue and ensure the smooth functioning of India's economy, particularly its vital transportation and agriculture sectors, analysts said.

Petrol and diesel prices were reduced by ₹2 per litre in mid-March, ending a nearly two-year-long hiatus in rate revision, which should have also propelled sales.

The effectiveness of recent government price cuts in stimulating diesel sales needs to be reassessed.

Investigating potential shifts towards alternative fuels such as CNG or electric vehicles in the transportation sector is crucial.

Monitoring economic indicators and studying diesel consumption patterns over a longer period will help determine if this is a temporary blip or a long-term trend requiring corrective action, the analysts said.

BIG CONCERN

- Demand down 3.9% in first fortnight of June
- Drop in demand for four months
- Decline a sign of weakening economy
- Diesel a major source of revenue. Fall in demand to hit government spending

Petrol use

Petrol sales of three state-owned firms, which control 90 per cent of the fuel market, at 1.42 million tonnes (mt) in the first half of June was almost the same as 1.41mt of fuel consumed in the same period last year.

Consumption of petrol during June 1-15 was 4.6 per cent lower than in the first fortnight of June 2022, and 28.1 per cent more than in the Covid-marred same period of 2020.

IFC to invest in Brookfield solar project

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Mumbai: International Finance Corporation (IFC) has committed $105 million (₹870 crore) to Brookfield Asset Management's solar project at Bikaner, Rajasthan.

The private financing arm of the World Bank group said it will part finance the 550 MWp (megawatt peak) solar power project.

The investment will be done through long-term non-convertible debentures allocated to the project's special purpose vehicles.

IFC said Brookfield will provide solar power to commercial and industrial (C&I) consumers across India at more competitive tariffs through long-term power purchase agreements (PPAs).

This is IFC's first investment in Asia and the Pacific using an innovative hybrid offtake structure where the project sells the power generated to C&I consumers under long-term corporate PPAs and merchant market.

It said the project will be connected to the inter-state transmission system section of India's green energy corridor.

According to IFC, India is in the midst of a green transition in the energy sector, having pledged to increase its non-fossil fuel capacity to 500GW by 2030.

The country's renewable energy sector has already attracted about $10 billion in annual investments between 2017 and 2022 and is expected to generate annual investments of $25 billion through 2030. Of this, around 20 per cent is estimated to be directed towards the C&I and merchant market.

"Through our partnership with Brookfield, IFC aims to facilitate the broader uptake of clean energy by demonstrating the viability of large-scale renewable energy generation, and sale to pan-India corporate and industrial clients, through the interstate transmission system," IFC's regional director for South Asia Imad N. Fakhoury said.

THE PLAN

- Will invest $105m
- Rajasthan plant to sell power to firms
- Power to be sold through transmission system

SBI eyes 14% loan growth

New Delhi: SBI expects 14-15 per cent loan growth during the fiscal year 2024-25, the bank's chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara said.

"Normally, we look at the GDP growth rate plus inflation and 2-3 per cent over that. That gives us around 14 per cent or so," Khara told PTI.

"Hence, 14-15 per cent credit growth depends upon the opportunities available for lending, and it meets our risk appetite. We will be happy to grow at this pace," he said.

As far as deposits are concerned, he said, it grew 11 per cent last year.

"And we have some elbow room available in terms of excess SLR which ensures that we don't have any pressure on us to raise the deposit rates for supporting our loan-to-deposit ratio," he said.

Dinesh Kumar Khara

The bank has an excess Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) between ₹3.5 lakh crore and ₹4 lakh crore.

"I may add here that our loan-to-deposit ratio is around 68-69 per cent only. That leaves enough room for us to lend without having pressure on the deposit interest rates.

Nevertheless, he said, "We always give importance to deposits. That is the reason why we increased the interest rate for the short-term deposits recently because we felt that there's room for improvement ... we should improve our deposit growth rate to some extent during this year. And our effort would be that we should at least grow around 12-13 per cent this year."

Last month, SBI hiked the fixed deposit rate on select short-term maturity up to 75 basis points. For retail term deposits of 46-179 days, the rate increased by 75 basis points to 5.50 per cent against the earlier 4.75 per cent.

On the net interest margin outlook for this fiscal, Khara said it would be around the same level recorded in FY24 or could be 2-3 basis points movement here or there.

PTI

Mixed EV show in May

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Calcutta: Electric vehicle sales in two-wheelers and passenger vehicle categories dropped off in May, while sales picked up in the three-wheeler and commercial vehicles category, according to official data.

Passenger electric vehicle retails in May recorded a fall of over 1 per cent year-on-year with total sales standing at 7,638 units compared with 7,734 units in May last year, according to Vahan data.

Month-on-month sales were up 3 per cent as April accounted for 7,415 units.

Tata Motors Passenger Vehicle led the pack with sales of 5,083 units in May down by 15.5 per cent over May 2023 sales of 6,018 units.

MG Motor India sold 1,441 compared with 464 units a year ago.

Electric two-wheeler sales, on the other hand, was down 27 per cent year-on-year with sales of 76,907 units in May compared with 1.05 lakh units a year ago.

Ola grew 29.5 per cent with sales of 37,225 units last month compared with 28,742 units in May last year.

TVS followed with 11,788 units, which is 42 per cent down from 20,434 units last year.

Bajaj sales fell 8.75 per cent to 9,214 units in May this year compared with 10,097 units in May last year.

Electric three-wheeler sales continue to grow with a 22.6 per cent YoY increase. In May this year, the segment sold 54,729 units compared with 44,641 units a year ago.

Lens on UAE trade deal as gold import soars

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi: India's gold and silver imports from the UAE, a key FTA partner, soared 210 per cent to $10.7 billion in 2023-24, raising concerns about unintended consequences of duty concessions under the CEPA trade deal, a report by the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said on Monday.

The surge has triggered concerns about the effectiveness and potential downsides of India's free trade agreement (FTA) with the Gulf nation, the report said.

The staggering increase in imports stands in stark contrast to a 9.8 per cent decline in the previous fiscal in overall imports from the UAE, suggesting a significant shift towards precious metals.

HIGH DEMAND

Analysts point to concessional duty rates under the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) as the primary driver of this surge.

India currently offers a 7 per cent tariff on unlimited silver imports and a 1 per cent concession on the first 160 tonnes of gold imported from the UAE. This creates a significant arbitrage opportunity, making imports from the UAE considerably cheaper compared with other countries.

The report raises several concerns with this trend like loss of government revenue. It said high import duties on precious metals (15 per cent) were intended to generate revenue for the Indian government.

However, the concessional rates under CEPA are leading to a substantial decline in tax collection. GTRI estimates a loss of ₹1.01 billion for silver imports alone in FY24. This decline could have a ripple effect on government spending plans for infrastructure and social programmes.

VentureSoul to raise ₹600cr

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Calcutta: VentureSoul Capital, a Sebi registered category II AIF (Alternate Investment Fund) floated by three former HSBC bankers, is raising ₹600 crore for its maiden debt fund focusing on the start-up ecosystem.

The anchor investor in the fund is healthcare company Micro Labs Ltd which is putting in 10 per cent of the fund.

It has received firm commitments from a bunch of HNIs (high net worth individuals) and family offices, including E Madhusudan (founder – Kreditbe), Glen Appliances Ltd, PSN group, Abhishek Khemka (promoter-Baazar Kolkata), Ponnuswami M (Pure Chemicals group), amongst others.

(From left) Kunal Wadhwa, Ashish Gala and Anurag Tripathi, co-founder and managing partner, VentureSoul Capital

Speaking on the fund's philosophy and investment mantra, Kunal Wadhwa, one of the partners, said the fund would invest in companies that are at Series A or beyond stage, with a demonstrated revenue model. "The sector agnostic fund will have a positive bias towards diversified fintech, B2C, B2B & SAAS companies," he added.

Kunal and his partners Anurag Tripathi and Ashish Gala are looking to give 18-20 per cent return to their investors. The debt fund will also have a 10 per cent equity component which translates to about ₹60 crore. The fund will pick up small equity in entities where it will extend debt.

VentureSoul is looking to deploy the fund over the next six quarters in 20-25 companies. It plans to follow new-age credit evaluation technology to secure investment in the portfolio companies.

Debt funds for the start-up ecosystem assume significance as they often stumble to raise credit from traditional banking systems due to the high risk nature of the business. Instead, they typically depend on equity from venture funds and their own sources.

After a few years of euphoria, valuation of the start-ups crashed and funds grew cold feet to lofty valuations. In FY24, about $10 billion of equity and $1.1 billion of debt was deployed in the start-up ecosystem. Many like Kunal believe that the valuation has moderated and the new economy companies are now looking not only at the topline but also at profitability.

Consequently, the valuation may perk up in 3-4 years, allowing existing investors upside going forward.

India may impose duties to tackle EU steel levy

New Delhi: India has the option to propose the imposition of retaliatory customs duties under the WTO norms on goods imported of a certain value from the EU, as the two sides have failed to reach a consensus on the European Union's safeguard measures on some steel products, an official has said.

The EU has extended safeguard duties on certain steel imports, scheduled to expire this month, by another two years till 2026. This is the second extension of the safeguards that take the form of the Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ), first imposed in 2018.

TRADE STAND

India is one of the countries affected by this measure as it has a substantial interest in steel exports to the EU.

In 2023-24, India's iron and steel and their products exports to the EU increased to $6.64 billion from $6.1 billion in 2022-23.

India, along with other countries, has earlier raised concerns at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) over the European Union's (EU) move to extend safeguard duty on the import of certain steel products till 2026.

New Delhi has also submitted its concerns to the EU regarding the manner in which safeguard measures have been extended and is violative of the global trade provisions and the WTO's Agreement on Safeguards.

The commerce and steel ministries are deliberating on the quantum of impact.

PTI

2000: Tiger Woods (left) wins his first US Open with a record-setting 15-stroke win over Ernie Els and Miguel Angel Jimenez

KICK OFF WITH The Telegraph

SPORT

AIFF TERMINATES COACH STIMAC'S CONTRACT P14

CALCUTTA TUESDAY 18 JUNE 2024 XXCL

IN BRIEF

Mbappe rules out Olympics

■ **DUSSELDORF:** Kylian Mbappe confirmed on Sunday he will not play for France's Olympic team at the Paris Games as his new club Real Madrid are against the idea. Mbappe was not included in a 25-man preliminary squad for the Olympics earlier this month, though head coach Thierry Henry left the door open. Reuters

US Open

■ **PINEHURST (US):** Bryson DeChambeau hit a 1-over-par 71, and that was enough for a one-shot victory here on Sunday, as he captured the US Open for the second time in five years. DeChambeau finished at 6-under 274, benefitting from Rory McIlroy's late putting failures. McIlroy finished as the US Open runner-up for the second year in a row. Reuters

Men disappoint

■ **NEW DELHI:** India's Ganemat Sekhon reached the final but finished sixth in women's skeet while none of the men made the cut on the penultimate day of the ISSF Shotgun World Cup in Lonato. PTI

T20 league

■ **CALCUTTA:** Adamas Howrah Warriors beat Harbour Diamonds by 31 runs in the inaugural Bengal Pro T20 League at Eden Gardens on Monday. In reply to the Warriors' 179/4, the Diamonds managed only 148/8. Our Bureau

CA initiative

■ **CALCUTTA:** Cricket Australia has said that fans purchasing tickets for any Test match this season will automatically be entered into a golden ticket lucky draw. Six lucky fans will have their tickets upgraded to a VIP experience, where the package includes, among others, a signed bat from the India, Australia and England cricketers. Our Bureau

NCA U-19 camp

■ **CALCUTTA:** Bengal's Yudhajit Guha and Chandrahas Dash have been selected for the U-19 High-Performance camp at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru from June 19. This is a camp for the upcoming U-19 World Cup next year. Our Bureau

Diving accident

■ **WELLINGTON (NEW ZEALAND):** US-born kitefoiler JJ Rice, who was to represent Tonga at the Paris Olympics, has died in a diving accident. He was 18. Kitefoilers race on boards that are lifted off the water on foils. AP/PTI

THIS DAY THAT YEAR

1960: Arnold Palmer stages a memorable comeback in US Open golf history, to erase a 7-stroke final round deficit and win his only US Open title by 2 strokes ahead of Jack Nicklaus.

2017: Pakistan defeat India by 180 runs in the Champions Trophy final at The Oval in London.

Slovaks hold fort after Schranz strike as VAR frustrates Lukaku

Belgium bow to Slovakia grit

Frankfurt: Ivan Schranz scored Slovakia's quickest goal at a major tournament to take his side to an upset 1-0 victory over wasteful Belgium in the European Championship Group E on Monday.

It was Belgium's first loss in 16 games under coach Domenico Tedesco and a flashback to their disastrous 2022 World Cup campaign, although they did have two goals ruled out by VAR.

EURO 2024 FOOT HOLD

The Slovakian players celebrate and thank the fans after their stunning 1-0 win over Belgium in the Euro 2024 Group E match in Frankfurt on Monday. (Getty Images)

Both were from the boot of Romelu Lukaku, the first for offside and the second a handball in the build-up on a hugely frustrating day for the burly striker in which he also missed several clear-cut chances.

Slovakia joined Romania at the top of the standings after their 3-0 win over Ukraine in Munich earlier on Monday. Belgium next meet Romania in Cologne on Saturday.

There had been talk before the game of this being a new Belgium, casting off the Golden Generation tag and filled with young talent, but the same problems persist.

Tedesco's side dominated the 90 minutes, but lacked a clinical touch.

Belgium were without their preferred central defensive pairing of Jan Vertonghen and Arthur Theate and with left winger Jeremy Doku playing on the right in the first half and Yannick Carrasco as a left wing-back, there was a lack of balance to the team.

It was that uncertainty that led to Slovakia's opener as Doku's poor ball into his own box was not dealt with by the defence and when Juraj Kucka's effort was saved, the ball fell to Schranz who beat Belgium goalkeeper Koen Casteels from a tight angle with a goal timed at six minutes and five seconds.

Belgium will feel they should have been 1-0 up by then as Lukaku was foiled from point-blank range by Slovakia goalkeeper Martin Dubravka after Doku's mesmerising run from his own half.

That was the first of three big chances in the half for Lukaku, who had scored 17 goals in 11 games under Tedesco.

Slovakia had opportunities too and they also showed excellent defensive discipline as every tackle was celebrated by the Slovak players as if they had scored a goal. Belgium came close again when a goalmouth scramble ended with substitute Johan Bakayoko shooting for what seemed a certain goal, only for Slovakia defender David Hancko to clear the ball off the line.

They were denied again when Lois Openda handled the ball after his persistence of the left-hand side had set up Lukaku. Reuters

ACTION REPLAY

BEL		SVK
56	Possession %	44
15	Attempts on goal	10
5	On target	4
5	Corners	7
568	Total passes	361
488	Completed passes	286
3	Saves	5

After 24 years, Romania revive 'soul' to soar high

Munich: Romania turned in a high-octane performance to win their first European Championship match in 24 years with an emphatic 3-0 victory over Ukraine in their Euro 2024 Group E opener on Monday.

Before the match, Romania coach Edward Iordanescu said his players would fight for every metre on the pitch and they did just that, flying into tackles and racing all over to defend in waves as their boisterous supporters roared them on.

"We've had golden generations with big performances but this generation represents the soul," Iordanescu said. "This team has put the biggest effort into everything.

As big a heart as this team, nobody has ever had. This generation is limitless."

ACTION REPLAY

ROU		UKR
34	Possession %	66
10	Attempts on goal	14
5	On target	2
4	Corners	8
240	Total passes	603
182	Completed passes	533
3	Saves	2

Stunning long-range strikes in each half, one from captain and Man-of-the-Match Nicolae Stanciu and the other from midfielder Razvan Marin, shocked Serhiy Rebrov's Ukraine, who had dominated the opening 20 minutes of the match.

Stanciu's cannon shot into the top right-hand corner gave Ukraine goalkeeper Andriy Lunin little chance. The Real Madrid keeper should have done better on the second, however, which slipped underneath him as he dived.

Stanciu called his strike the goal of his career and said the support from fans was like something he had never experienced. "(The support) was unique. We've never felt anything like this before. My siblings, my father and my wife... all had tears in their eyes."

Dennis Man — who became the first Romania player to provide multiple assists in a match at a major tournament since Gheorghe Hagi against Colombia in the 1994 World Cup — created the first goal after intercepting Lunin's poor clearance and sweeping the ball to Stanciu. Shortly before the hour mark, Man drove into the box from a corner and put the ball across goal for Denis Dragus to tap in.

Romania's tight-knit defence helped secure their second win across 17 matches at the Euro finals, the first being a 3-2 victory over England at Euro 2000.

For Iordanescu, whose father Anghel had three spells in charge of Romania and took them to the 1994 World Cup quarter finals, the victory showed his side's unbeaten qualifying campaign was no fluke.

Reuters

Romania's Nicolae Stanciu (shirt No. 21) scores his team's first goal past Ukraine's Andriy Lunin in the Euro 2024 Group E game in Munich on Monday. (Reuters)

EYE ON BALL: France's Kylian Mbappe warms up ahead of the Group D match against Austria in Dusseldorf on Monday. (Reuters)

COMING UP

Indian time

TURKEY Vs GEORGIA
9.30pm, Tuesday

PORTUGAL Vs CZECHIA
12.30am, Wednesday

Matches live on Sony Sports Network & SonyLIV

RESULTS

SERBIA 0	ENGLAND 1
ROMANIA 3	UKRAINE 0
BELGIUM 0	SLOVAKIA 1

Albania in a spot

Frankfurt: Albania are facing four Uefa charges over a "provocative message" allegedly displayed by their fans and other behavior in a Euro 2024 loss (1-2) to Italy.

Uefa said on Sunday that Albania were facing disciplinary proceedings over the message, throwing of objects, use of fireworks and an "invasion of the field of play".

One person entered the field of play near the end of the game.

Uefa didn't say which message it objected to.

AP/PTI

Not a 'waltz', but England show the moves

Gelsenkirchen: England's rearguard effort in a nervy second half as they held on to beat Serbia 1-0 on Sunday will hold the team in good stead as they look to go far at Euro 2024, coach Gareth Southgate said.

England, runners-up in the 2020 edition and seeking to finally win a trophy befitting their vast array of attacking talent, started brilliantly and led after 13 minutes through midfielder Jude Bellingham's superb header.

But they created few chances and allowed Serbia, who were much improved after the break, to play their way back into the Group C game.

"I'm pleased that we had to show a different side, we had to show that resilience to defend our box, because I think as a group, that really builds a huge spirit," Southgate said.

He added: "Our team ran out of some energy and that didn't surprise me because of the lack of 90 minutes that lots of the players have had... I think we can be more efficient in the way that we played in the first half, which would also help us."

Southgate said England were still a side in transition, without stalwarts like centre-back Harry Maguire, who is injured, and midfielder Jordan Henderson, who was left out of the Euros, and with several inexperienced players in the squad.

"This team is still coming together," he said. "Everybody's expecting us to waltz through. There's a lot of hard work ahead. We're short of certain things, we're finding the best possible solutions. We've had a very complicated run-in to all of this, but the spirit of the group was there for everybody to see and we will definitely grow from that."

Man of the Match Bellingham said they would take the positives from the game. "Obviously, commonly with the team there's a negative theme around all our games — and sometimes rightly so — but I think in this case you take the positives," he said.

"OK, maybe we had to hold on at times and suffer a little bit, but we kept a clean sheet and when you keep a clean sheet, all you have to do is score one goal."

On the Serbian front, midfielder Filip Kostic, who was replaced with an injury in the 43rd minute of the game, is thought to have sustained a ligament injury in his left knee, coach Dragan Stojkovic said.

With inputs from Reuters

ACTION REPLAY

SRB		ENG
47	Possession %	53
6	Attempts on goal	5
1	On target	3
2	Corners	1
512	Total passes	600
454	Completed passes	544
2	Saves	1

England's Jude Bellingham celebrates after scoring against Serbia in Gelsenkirchen on Sunday. (Reuters)

Kuldeep Yadav, in a picture shared on X, during one of India's training sessions.

Kuldeep poser for Team India in Super 8s

SAYAK BANERJEE

Calcutta: The final group-phase game against minnows Canada presented the Indian team management with an opportunity to try out a different combination as it was basically an inconsequential game. But a washout last Saturday at Lauderhill in Florida squashed such hopes.

The onging T20 World Cup will now be in its Super 8 phase with all the matches to be held in the Caribbean. Placed in Group 1, India begin their Super 8 journey against Afghanistan at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown on Thursday.

T20 WORLD CUP

The pitches in the West Indies should be of some relief to the likes of skipper Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Rishabh Pant and Suryakumar Yadav in particular, who are all known for their stroke-making ability and want the ball to come on to the bat. But in terms of bowling, should India carry on with three specialist quicks and the left-arm orthodox pair of Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel as their two spinners?

Or, should India draft in another specialist spinner in their XI at the expense of a fast bowler? Talking of the Bridgetown pitch, one usually comes across a reasonably balanced surface that tends to slow down as the game progresses, meaning spinners will be having a role to play in the later stages.

Bridgetown has so far hosted five games in the ongoing T20 showpiece event with the Australia-England group-stage clash being the last fixture at the venue. Leg spinner Adam Zampa's bowling, including his scalps of both Salt and Buttler, were crucial to Australia's 36-run win in that game. Spin thus will be a factor on such a surface.

It wouldn't be wrong for India to trust their winning combination and keep it intact. But the conditions in Bridgetown and the other venues in the Caribbean do bring a specialist spinner in the fray, Kuldeep Yadav in particular.

The chinaman bowler has decent numbers in T20Is in the Windies (five wickets from three matches at an economy rate of 6.83). His ability to turn the ball the other way, creating doubts in the minds of the batsmen over whether the ball will turn or go straight along with the quicker one certainly brings him into picture.

More importantly, Kuldeep has been bowling well and can strike at critical moments even on flat surfaces, which can change the complexion of a game. Including Kuldeep in place of Mohammed Siraj may appear a tad unfair on the pacer, but how does one drop left-arm quick Arshdeep Singh when he has been consistent and is also the joint highest wicket-taker (7) for India along with Hardik Pandya?

Pandya's presence does give some sort of a cushion to the Jasprit Bumrah-led pace attack. So, it may not be totally unwise to pick Kuldeep in place of a specialist pacer.

Lockie Ferguson of New Zealand celebrates the wicket of Charles Amini of Papua New Guinea during their T20 World Cup match in Tarouba on Monday. Ferguson finished with 4-4-0-3, the most economical four-over spell ever in T20Is, which helped New Zealand bowl their opponents out for a paltry 78 in 19.4 overs. New Zealand won by seven wickets with 46 balls to spare. (Getty Images)

Bangla win

OUR BUREAU

Calcutta: Bangladesh's bowlers stepped up once again as they defended their total of 106 by bowling out Nepal for 85 in Kingstown on Sunday. The win confirmed their place in the Super 8 stage.

Pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib was the wrecker-in-chief with 4/7, but it was overall a strong collective effort from the entire bowling unit.

Brief scores: Bangladesh 106 in 19.3 (Shakib Al Hasan 17). Nepal 85 in 19.2 (Tanzim Hasan Sakib 4/7, Mustafizur Rahman 3/7, Shakib Al Hasan 2/9). Bangladesh won by 21 runs.

PAK CRISIS

No unity in team, says Kirsten

New Delhi: In a scathing criticism of the beleaguered Pakistan cricket team, head coach Gary Kirsten has said that there is "no unity" in the side and he has "never seen such a situation" in his long coaching career.

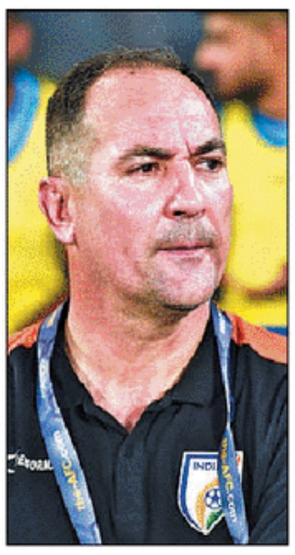
Kirsten's criticism follows the Pakistan team's group-stage exit from the ongoing T20 World Cup in the USA and the West Indies.

The runners-up from the previous edition, Pakistan suffered a shock loss to newcomers USA before biting the dust against traditional rivals India. They picked up a consolation win over Ireland before exiting.

According to media reports in Pakistan, Kirsten, who guided India to ODI World Cup triumph in 2011, pulled no punches in his assessment of the team.

"There's no unity in Pakistan's team. They call it a team, but it isn't a team. They aren't supporting each other; everyone is separated, left and right. I've worked with many teams, but I've never seen such a situation," Kirsten said as per reports in a Pakistani daily.

PTI



Igor Stimac before India's World Cup Qualifer against Kuwait at the Salt Lake Stadium on June 6

Stimac sacked, showdown on cards

ANGSHUMAN ROY

Calcutta: The All India Football Federation (AIFF) and national team coach Igor Stimac look set for a long battle off the field after the apex body terminated the Croat's contract on Monday.

The AIFF decision resulted from India's failure to qualify for Round III of the 2026 World Cup Qualifers. It was taken at a meeting chaired by AIFF vice-president NA Haris. "Noting the disappointing outcome of the Senior Men's National Team's FIFA World Cup 2026 qualification campaign, the members unanimously agreed that a new Head Coach would be best placed to take the team forward," an AIFF statement said.

The AIFF offered a three-month compensation to the 56-year-old Stimac but sources said he would not be ready to bow out without a fight.

"The compensation is much less than what the severance package should be," a source said. The severance package on paper is $360,000 which comes to Rs 3 crore approximately. The three-month compensation is just $120,000.

It has been learnt Stimac was ready to do away with his three-month salary provided the AIFF brass also resigned taking responsibility for the team's consistent failure for the past six months.

"It's ridiculous to say something like this. We are not the coach and we did not say in March that if India failed to advance to Round III we would resign. If Stimac wants to fight it on court, then we have no other option," a senior official said.

"In the national interest, he had to leave," another official added.

In March this year, on the eve of India's Qualifer against Afghanistan in Guwahati, Stimac had said he would resign should his team fail to advance. The next day, the now-retired Sunil Chhetri and his men lost to the Afghans 2-1 which sealed India's fate.

Appointed as head coach in the summer of 2019, Stimac's contract was renewed for the third time in October 2023 till June 2026.

Had India qualified for the third round that would have been automatically extended for another two years.

At 39, Cristiano still has hunger for trophies, teammate says captain 'always thinks big'

A relaxed Portugal captain Cristiano Ronaldo (centre) with teammates during a training session earlier this month. (Reuters)

Ageless CR7 eyes one more

Leipzig: Cristiano Ronaldo is set to become the first player to feature at six European Championships when Portugal open their Euro 2024 campaign against the Czechia.

Ronaldo, who made his tournament debut at Euro 2004 where Portugal reached the final, already has the records for the most goals (14) and appearances (25) at the tournament.

The 39-year-old forward showed he's not finished yet by scoring two goals as Portugal warmed up with a 3-0 win over Ireland.

EURO 2024 FOOT HOLD

Ronaldo bagged five goals at Euro 2020, the same as Czechia striker Patrik Schick to share the top-scorer award. Schick is again the main target for the Czech team and arrives full of confidence after helping Bayer Leverkusen win the Bundesliga.

The Euro 2024 could be Ronaldo's international swansong, although the 39-year-old appears as hungry for goals and adulation as ever.

Police had to intervene to remove some enamored supporters from Portugal's open training session in Gutersloh on Saturday when they ran onto the field to take selfies with the Portugal star. Some 8,000 fans attended the training session.

While he may have moved away from Europe's elite to play in Saudi Arabia, the goal-getting instincts of the leading scorer in men's international football seem as razor sharp as ever.

He finished second-top scorer in qualifying with 10 goals and smashed 35 in 31 league games for Al Nassr last season.

"Ronaldo always thinks in big proportions, and we want to support him because he is our captain. He's the one who has won the most among us," Portugal and Manchester United defender Diogo Dalot said.

But Ronaldo is not the only danger for the Czechs, who are making their eight successive appearance.

Even without Ronaldo, Portugal boast a formidable attacking lineup with Barcelona's Joao Felix, Paris Saint-Germain's Goncalo Ramos and Milan's Rafael Leao all providing options for Bruno Fernandes in midfield.

While Ronaldo lifted the trophy in 2016, he may still be harbouring a sense of unfinished business on the international stage.

Czechia's Patrik Schick celebrates after scoring against North Macedonia during a friendly in the build-up to the Euro 2024. (Reuters)

Having sat out most of that final eight years ago through injury, he has failed to propel Portugal to further glory at two subsequent World Cups or at Euro 2020, when they were knocked out in the last-16.

This has been one of Portugal's most gilded generations but with Ronaldo and 41-year-old defender Pepe in the twilight of their careers, Euro 2024 has the feel of a last hurrah.

With a squad bulging with talent, Portugal will be, on paper, one of the best teams in Germany. They won all of their 10 games in the qualifiers, scoring 36 and conceding twice.

"I believe this generation deserves to win a competition of this magnitude," Ronaldo told reporters upon arrival in Germany, setting his sights on the Henri Delaunay trophy.

Yet their manager Roberto Martinez knows all about the pitfalls of leading a supremely talented bunch of players at international tournaments, having failed to turn Belgium's so-called 'Golden Generation' into tournament winners.

Martinez, however, also knows he has arguably the game's best in Ronaldo.

"We have 23 players. We create competitiveness and the game makes decisions," he said earlier this month.

"But Cristiano is prepared to help the team and give everything he can give. And there is no other player in the world who can bring what Cristiano can to the dressing room."

Schick, who won goal of the tournament at Euro 2020 for his stunner against Scotland from the halfway line, will spearhead a Czech side with very different expectations.

The Czechs finished second in qualifying behind Albania, winning four of their eight matches in a group that also included Poland, Moldova and the Faroe Islands.

With Schick absent from the final rounds of qualifying, they found goals hard to come by but, fresh from the 'double' with Leverkusen, he seems to have shaken off the injuries that hampered him and that could spell trouble for Portugal.

"I believe we have the ambitions. We could be knocked out in the group stage, or we could win it," Czechia coach Ivan Hasek said.

With inputs from AP/PTI, Reuters

BOX-TO-BOX

Portugal won all their 10 matches in the qualifying round and scored 36 goals, the most by any team.

STATS ASSIST

Head-to-head
Matches 5 Portugal 4 Czechia 1 Drawn 0

Form factor

Portugal	W L W L W
Czechia	W W W W W

Turkey, Georgia pin hopes on Serie A stars

Dortmund: Turkey begin their Euro 2024 campaign against newcomers Georgia on Tuesday knowing a winning start in one of the tournament's weaker groups would give them a great chance of making the knockout stages after disappointing last time around.

Tipped as dark horses going into Euro 2020, Turkey crashed out having lost all three group-stage games but they impressed in qualifying for Germany as they topped a group including 2022 World Cup finalists Croatia.

Their more recent form has been mixed: since beating Germany 3-2 in Berlin in November, Turkey have not won in five games and were hammered 6-1 by Austria in a friendly in March before holding reigning champions Italy to a draw this month.

Turkey's ambitions of progressing from a group also containing Euro 2016 winners Portugal and Czech Republic rest in large part on captain and midfielder Hakan Calhanoglu, a key part of Inter Milan's Serie A-winning side.

Hopes are also high for attacking midfielder Arda Guler after the 19-year-old came back from injury to score five goals in five games at the end of Real Madrid's victorious La Liga campaign.

Georgia, meanwhile, are playing in their first-ever major tournament and are the clear underdogs in Group F. Their slim prospects of qualifying for the last-16 will rest largely on the shoulders of talisman Khvicha Kvaratskhelia.

With Valencia goalkeeper Giorgi Mamardashvili reportedly a target for several top European clubs and forward Georges Mikautadze impressing on loan at Metz last season, Georgia have talent at both ends of the pitch.

But Napoli's Kvaratskhelia — dubbed "Kvaradona" in a nod to Diego Maradona, perhaps the greatest compliment Napoli fans can give — must be at his best if Georgia are to spring a surprise and try to help unite a fractured nation, recently wracked by huge protests against a controversial "foreign agent" law.

Kvicha Kvaratskhelia of Georgia takes a selfie with a ballboy after the international friendly against Montenegro on June 9. (Getty Images)

"It was the greatest dream of every Georgian to become a part of such an important tournament, and it was the happiest day for all of us when we achieved it," Kvaratskhelia told *uefa.com*.

"But we didn't come here just to attend, we wish to leave our mark on Euro 2024, to write a new page of history."

Reuters

BOX-TO-BOX

Turkey have lost six of their last seven matches at Euro Championships and have just one clean sheet to show in their last 12 matches at the meet.

STATS ASSIST

Head-to-head
Matches 5 Turkey 3 Georgia 1 Drawn 1

Form factor

Turkey	L D L L D
Georgia	W D W L D

'Hungarian Viking' laughs off memes

Stuttgart: Footballers nowadays tend to be lean and svelte to keep up with the demands of the fast-paced game, so Hungary forward Martin Adam is not surprised to see social media memes about his unusually large frame, even if some go too far.

Adam came on as a substitute late in Hungary's opening 3-1 defeat by Switzerland in Cologne and caused a stir among fans online who were surprised to see a player 6 feet 3 inches tall and weighing around 86 kgs running onto the pitch.

The Ulsan Hyundai striker also has a shaved head and a large ginger beard, leading to his nickname the 'Hungarian Viking'.

"The posts? Of course one or two get to me, I usually have a laugh about it," Adam, 29, told a press conference at the team's base on Sunday.

"I was born this way, I have this body shape. I'm not saying that I was this big when I was born, but I have a basic, physique. Genetics — I can't change that."

Most of the posts are positive, though, as Adam has quickly become something of a fan favourite already at the tournament after his short cameo.

Hungary supporters will just be hoping their No. 9 can add to his three-goal tally for the team in their next game, against Germany on Wednesday.

Reuters

Martin Adam of Hungary

Criticism does not bother Neuer

Herzogenaurach: Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer is not wasting any time on a debate over his recent performances, saying any analysis was taking place internally with the focus now on Wednesday's second Euro 2024 Group A game.

Neuer has been the undisputed Germany No. 1 since the 2010 World Cup but in recent games, including Bayern Munich's Champions League semi-final elimination by Real Madrid, he has looked far from world class.

The 38-year-old broke his leg in December, 2022 while skiing following a disappointing World Cup first-round exit in Qatar, and did not return to action until November.

But Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann opted for Neuer as his tournament No. 1, relegating 32-year-old Marc-Andre ter Stegen to the bench again.

Manuel Neuer during a training session in Herzogenaurach, Germany, on Monday. (Getty Images)

"I have been seeing it (debate) from the outside to be honest," Neuer told a press conference on Monday.

"I did not read anything and that is really how I have always done it.

"We discuss everything internally with those responsible. We look at the videos and evaluate everything based on those videos. So I did not spare any thoughts on this debate."

Ter-Stegen had voiced his disappointment shortly before the tournament in Germany got underway but said he accepted his role and would fully support the team.

"The trust is what's important and the trust among teammates and coaching staff is very high," Neuer said. "And for me the focus was on the Scotland game and then the next group matches."

Germany's second game is on Wednesday against Hungary who lost 3-1 to Switzerland in their opener.

"We have started preparations for the Hungary game and the focus and concentration is increasing," Neuer said. "Against Scotland we exuded dominance from the start.

"But we have our feet on the ground. We have some confidence now but Hungary will be a different level."

Reuters

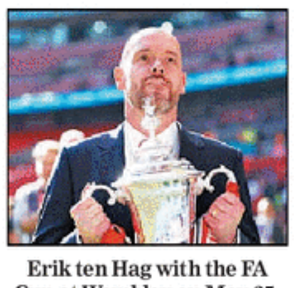
Ten Hag confirms United spoke to other managers

Manchester: Erik ten Hag said he was aware that Manchester United had spoken to other managers before the Premier League club decided to stick with the Dutchman after a difficult season.

Ten Hag said he was on a holiday in Ibiza when members of the United hierarchy arrived to inform him they wanted him to remain as the United manager.

Former Chelsea and Bayern Munich boss Thomas Tuchel and England manager Gareth Southgate were among those linked with the position after United finished eighth in the Premier League last season.

Speaking on Dutch TV channel NOS, Ten Hag said: "The club management came to me while I was on holiday in Ibiza. They suddenly showed up on my doorstep and told me they wanted to continue with me.



Erik ten Hag with the FA Cup at Wembley on May 25. (Reuters)

"As in any organisation, it is wise to evaluate. Manchester United did that too. The new owner (Jim Ratcliffe) is new to football, he has taken his time.

"They have indeed told me that they have spoken to other managers. That is not even allowed in the Netherlands.

"You are not even allowed to talk to another club if there is a current trainer there. But in England the rules and laws are different.

"But in the end they came to the conclusion that they have the best trainer," Ten Hag quipped.

The two parties are in the process of agreeing on a new contract after Ten Hag engineered a stunning victory for United over Manchester City in the FA Cup final.

"We have had good discussions with each other, various topics have been discussed," he said.

"The conclusion is that we will continue together and that they will extend my contract. We still have to reach an agreement on that."

Manchester United might have won the FA Cup but their eighth place finish was their worst since 1990. "It was a turbulent season. Never a dull moment", Ten Hag added.

AP/PTI, Reuters

OLYMPIC & WORLD CHAMPION FACES A STELLAR FIELD AT PAAVO NURMI GAMES

Fit Neeraj resumes Paris build-up today

Neeraj Chopra makes a throw during the javelin throw event at the National Federation Senior Athletics Competition in Bhubaneswar on May 15. (PTI)

Turku (Finland): Forced into a short break to mend a niggle, Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra will return to competitive action at the Paavo Nurmi Games here on Tuesday against a stellar field, hoping to continue his build-up to Paris Games with renewed vigour.

The 26-year-old superstar, the lone Indian in the field here, will be up against German teenaged sensation Max Dehning, who is the youngest member of the coveted 90m club, which Chopra is aspiring to enter.

The 19-year-old is being seen as a major competition for Chopra when he defends his Tokyo Games gold medal in Paris.

Local favourite Oliver Helander, who had beaten the Indian in the 2022 edition of the one-day competition, will also be there.

The Indian won a silver medal in 2022 with a throw of 89.30m, which was a personal best at that time. Chopra improved that mark to 89.94m at the Stockholm leg of the Diamond League in the same year.

Two-time world champion Anderson Peters of Grenada and 2012 Olympic champion Keshorn Walcott of Trinidad and Tobago are in fray as well here.

Chopra had withdrawn from last month's Ostrava Golden Spike as a precautionary measure after he "felt something in my adductor (group of muscles located on inner thighs)".

He began his season at the Doha Diamond League in May, where he finished second with his final throw of 88.36m, the ninth best mark of his career. Jakub Vadlejch, who beat Chopra in the Doha Diamond League will not be competing here.

Chopra also participated at the National Federation Cup Senior Athletics Championships in Bhubaneswar, where he secured the gold medal with an underwhelming effort of 82.27m.

After the Paavo Nurmi Games, Chopra will next be seen in action at the Paris Diamond League on July 7.

"Further competition schedule will be decided later according to situation and my body," Chopra had said earlier.

PTI

ACTION TIME

- Javelin throw event from 9.45pm IST on Tuesday, live on Sports18